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EDITORIAL

TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY

"Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn" accurately describes the attitude toward convention rules and voter registration that the average delegate brought to Atlanta. But as a result of the accord between Michael Dukakis and Jesse Jackson, the Democratic Party has for the first time written new party-expanding rules into its charter rather than deferring them to a post-convention commission that is inevitably subject to the claims of established interests, party bosses and big contributors. The changes codify the principle of proportional representation in delegate selection by reducing the share of "superdelegates" and banning winner-take-all and "bonus" formulas in primaries.

Those reforms embody the spirit of the McGovern commission's recommendations of 1970, which were in part abandoned in succeeding years. But a bigger challenge now begins: enlarging the party's progressive base by registering 5 million people, two-thirds of them from below the poverty line. When, beginning in the 1880s, state voter-registration laws were passed to disenfranchise blacks in the South and Populists and immigrants in the North, participation steadily declined. Today, nearly 50 percent of Americans do not vote in presidential elections; 60 percent do not vote in Senate and House elections; 70 to 90 percent do not vote in state and local elections.

Jackson and Dukakis have put on-site, same-day, agency-based and mail-in voter registration at the top of their joint agenda. Representative John Conyers and Senator Alan Cranston have introduced legislation toward that end, and on Friday after the convention closed, Jackson met with his 1,200 delegates to organize a state-by-state registration campaign. The status politics of exclusion have not yet blown away, but in time they will be gone with the wind.

BENTSEN
Molly Ivins

BANKS IN THE MARKET
Herman Gold

GOOD FRIENDS IN SALVADOR
Jefferson Morley

THE PARTY CONGRESS
Daniel Singer

THE MEXICAN YANQUI
Earl Shorris

91 SECONDS
Michael Shulan

DAVID HOCKNEY
Arthur C. Danto

POLICING THE THIRD WORLD

A BLUEPRINT FOR ENDLESS INTERVENTION

MICHAEL T. KLARE

Two recent developments have lent new clarity to the meaning of "low-intensity conflict" (L.I.C.), the Pentagon's emerging doctrine for military action in the late 1980s and beyond. Originally devised as a response to guerrilla war in Central America, L.I.C. is now being applied to a much larger range of military contingencies in the Third World.

First, the initiation of planning for possible U.S. military intervention in Panama. According to press accounts, one plan—reportedly drawn up by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams—called for two Army brigades of 3,000 men each to wrest control of the Panamanian government from General Manuel Antonio Noriega and install a new government headed by President Eric Arturo Delvalle. Although these plans were ultimately vetoed by senior Pentagon officials, the White House did send another 1,300 soldiers to Panama and indicated that it was prepared to deploy additional troops if American lives were in danger there.

Second, the recurring U.S. attacks on Iranian oil platforms and naval vessels in the Persian Gulf. The oil platform attacks, ordered by President Reagan on April 18 in retaliation for the mining of an American frigate, precipitated the biggest clash to date between U.S. and Iranian forces in the troubled gulf area. Afterward, the President approved new rules of engagement, which allow U.S. forces—for the first time—to protect neutral shipping in the gulf, as well as U.S.-flag carriers. (These rules subsequently led to another serious naval clash, on July 3, when the U.S.S. Vincennes attacked

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LETTERS.

SHERRILL'S 'DORIAN COHN'

Cambridge, Mass.

Robert Sherrill's review of two biographies of Roy Cohn and lambasting of him ["King Cohn," May 21], is inflammatory and reasonably informative. I am troubled, however, by Sherrill's thinly veiled homophobia. My suspicions were raised when Sherrill described the parties held in the basement of Studio 54, "where, along with high society's homosexuals, transsexuals and transvestites, one could find many illustrious souls who were there for the kick of watching and smelling." The tone of this description conveys contempt and a certain disgust. I am sure that the parties described were disgustingly decadent; high society usually is. But heterosexual high society is no less disgusting than homosexual high society.

If this were Sherrill's only indiscretion, however, I could have dismissed it as carelessness. It is not the only one. Sherrill concludes with a lengthy, gory description of Cohn's sex life. Cohn's homosexual affairs are an interesting part of his life story, especially given his own homophobia. Cohn was certainly despicable. But homosexual affairs do not constitute an indictment of evil or grossness. Sherrill tells us that "Cohn was a *particularly* nasty homosexual" (my emphasis). How can we read this except as a statement that all homosexuals are nasty?

Sherrill concludes with a supposedly self-explanatory description of Cohn's pitiable death from AIDS. "To his death he denied that he was homosexual, but the Dorian Gray scene of his dying of AIDS said it all: 'Roy . . . lay in bed, unheeding, his flesh cracking open, sores on his body, his faculties waning' and with a one-inch 'slit-like wound above [his] anus.'" Sherrill says this scene "said it all"; but what, I would like to know, is Sherrill saying? What is Dorian Gray doing here? I doubt many modern homosexuals identify with Wilde's dandyish, nihilistic, rather evil sensualist. Can Sherrill really be making the deeply moralistic connection between homosexuality and AIDS that I think he is? I balk at the thought, but cannot disregard it. I am curious to know how your editors responded to Sherrill's slurs. Did you notice them at all, did you laugh or wince, did you decide they were too integral to his article to be excised? Whatever the case, I fervently hope that you will be more sensitive in the future. *Iris Bennett*

'PARTICULARLY' HOMOPHOBIC

New City, N.Y.

A "particularly nasty homosexual" is the worst kind, right? Like a particularly greedy Jew or a particularly lazy black or a particularly dumb Catholic?

Robert Sherrill, reviewing two biographies of Roy Cohn, provides much imagery of stuffed crotches and big boxes and male musculature and humping, and even offers two detailed, shuddering descriptions of Cohn's rectal area. This all feels relevant to Sherrill, whose summary thesis is that AIDS was to Cohn as the portrait was to Dorian Gray—"the Dorian Gray scene of his dying of AIDS *said it all*" (emphasis mine), he explains.

The Nation would have been doing everybody, especially Robert Sherrill, a favor by counseling him about the grotesque and repugnant homophobia that permeated his otherwise, and characteristically, trenchant piece. *Elsa Rush*

SHERRILL REPLIES

Tallahassee, Fla.

Iris Bennett's complaint in the first paragraph is thinly veiled piffle. I'm glad she correctly senses my contempt and disgust, but for the rest of it she seems to have missed my point entirely. Perhaps if she suppresses what seems to be an intense desire to preach and just goes back and reads the section in a straightforward, common-sensical fashion, she'll see what I'm getting at and maybe even agree with me.

When she suggests "Cohn was a particularly nasty homosexual" can only be read to mean I think all homosexuals are nasty, she must be kidding. And if she is not kidding, she is a sad case. Poor thing; anyone who has so much trouble handling comparatives must miss a lot of the simple nuances of life. When people were saying Gary Hart is a particularly indiscreet philanderer, she must have thought they weren't aware that millions of skilled philanderers are the very soul of discretion. Finally on this point, let me assure Bennett that when I say I think she is a particularly inept reader, I do not—not—mean I think all readers are inept.

Her last paragraph is so confused and confusing I'm not sure I can handle it. I'll just say that my review was of a book that went into great detail about Cohn's dying, to good purpose, since there was something quite fitting in the putrescent ending of this very putrescent fellow. Whether "many modern homosexuals identify with Wilde's dandyish, nihilistic, rather evil sensualist" is beside the point. We're not talking about "many." We're talking about Roy Cohn. He was no dandy, but he was a particularly nihilistic and a particularly evil sensualist—as Bennett would know if she had read Nicholas von Hoffman's book.

I don't know how *The Nation*'s editors reacted to my "slurs," but I sincerely hope that they inspired them to go en masse to Roy Cohn's grave and commit a particularly unseemly act on it.

I think my response to Iris Bennett's letter generally covers Elsa Rush's complaints, but I would add this: If she insists on making "nasty homosexual" a single phrase, that's her hang-up, not mine. On the other hand, if this is the old cocktail liberal trick of trying to scare a person away from speaking honestly by suggesting that some words are taboo because they are stereotypical, that won't work. If it is pertinent to mention that a man is black, and pertinent to mention that he is lazy, and pertinent to mention that he is particularly lazy, I won't hesitate for a moment to call him a particularly lazy black. Ditto her Catholic example (which, however, took me by surprise, since I was unaware that "dumb Catholic" was a stereotype).

Rush gives us a particularly pitiful example of liberalism's gutlessness. She does not find Roy Cohn's life grotesque and repugnant, or if she does she is afraid to say so. She does not find the manner of his dying grotesque and repugnant, or if she does she is afraid to say so. She is apparently too cowardly to look directly at that life and death and make honest conclusions. In fact, she apparently is too cowardly even to look into the mirror that Nicholas von Hoffman holds up to that life and death. Instead, she attacks *my review* as "grotesque and repugnant," although it is merely the reflection of a reflection. That's hilarious. *Robert Sherrill*

AGAINST PIOUS POLITICS

Silver Spring, Md.

Christopher Hitchens's June 11 "Minority Report" column on the recent attacks on Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis's religious convictions deftly states the troubling results of inappropriate mixing of religion and politics. The column, however, may have left readers with the impression that there has been no opposition to the actions of James Jatras, the Republican Party staffer who initiated the campaign.

In fact, Americans United for Separation of Church and State vigorously protested this unfair political attack. We called on the chairmen of both political parties to disavow this action and asked Senator William Armstrong of the Republican Policy Committee (Jatras's employer) to discipline Jatras.

Our motivation is strictly nonpartisan and springs from our belief that, in keeping with the principle of church-state separation, no candidate should have to undergo any religious test for public office. A candidate's stands on the political and constitutional issues of the day, not his religious beliefs or his relationship to his church, should be the subject of campaign debate.

As a result of our efforts, the Greek Orthodox Church has repudiated the Jatras effort, and Frank Fahrenkopf, Republican national chairman, has stated he does not believe religion should be the basis for political attack. (Senator Armstrong, however, has refused to intervene, and Jatras insists that he will continue his fanatical campaign.) *Robert L. Maddox*
Americans United for Separation of Church and State

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EDITORIALS.

Jackson's Heat

Atlanta

The Democratic National Convention ended before it began, with neither a bang nor a whimper but a photo opportunity. The factional fighting between the Dukakis and Jackson forces, which had raged for months in the platform negotiations, in the choosing of a vice-presidential nominee and in the developing relations between the two candidates and their campaign staffs concluded several hours before the first call to order with an elegantly composed camera shot, in living black and white: Dukakis squat and squarely in the middle, flanked by the twin towers of Jackson on the left and Lloyd Bentsen on the right. Seldom has symbolism so exactly expressed the real apportionment of power.

The rest of the week provided endless annotations and elaborations on that composition, but nothing changed the essential configuration of forces. The Jackson campaign won a night of its own at the Omni Coliseum as well as several points on the platform, both in substance and in spirit. "Hope"—Jackson's word for the week—made it into the title of the document, along with language and planks representing to some degree the Rainbow Coalition's stands on southern Africa, "economic violence," social spending, women's rights, bilingualism and voter registration. The right got to keep its cold war position on possible first use of nuclear weapons, on tax policy favoring the rich and on maintaining the military budget at roughly the current level. And the "pragmatic" party of the center, which hews to a hard line of commitment to electoral advantage, succeeded in pulling most of the disparate Democratic elements together into a show of unity, at least until the cheering dies down.

This convention, like all of them, was about the distribution of power within the party, and specifically about the audacious demands of Jackson's progressive coalition for a

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share of the action. Jackson could not expect to win more in the halls here than he got on the ground during the primaries, but it is always difficult to quantify political victories, as opposed to captured territory and casualties of war.

The contest is further complicated by the potential for cooptation. Nobility on the battlefield may succumb in a flash to the promise of power, policies, contracts or a job when supplicants come face to face with the dispensers of favors. The Jackson insurgents probably got as much from the Dukakis regulars as they could reasonably expect this year, but some summer soldiers—particularly elected officials—seemed awfully eager to abandon their independence when the first fruits of surrender appeared on the menu.

Not that the deal between the camps that emerged when the convention opened Monday morning was easily shaped. Since the California primary seven weeks before, Dukakis had pressured Jackson (on different levels and by many means) to drop his active candidacy and to accept and endorse the inevitable ticket. Jackson kept on keeping on, by playing the vice-presidential card, by campaigning on his "message" and by implicitly threatening to separate his black base from the campaign in the fall.

By the beginning of July, the heat was on. Dukakis became uncharacteristically testy in public. He snarled to reporters: "Jesse Jackson can do what he wants." His people on the platform committee began stonewalling on the issues and started spinning to the press that Jackson was a "sore loser." For Jackson, the last straw was the Bentsen event. Not only had Dukakis chosen the living antithesis of a Rainbow candidate; he seemed to be setting Jackson up for humiliation and then rubbing Jackson's nose in his disgrace by closing the final days of the process to outside participation. Jackson had expected Dukakis to call him beforehand, explain the strategic necessities of his choice according to the "numbers" and ask for Jackson's help and support in the campaign. Instead, Jackson got a very stiff arm.

Dukakis might have seen that the affair would backfire badly. Bentsen never got the honeymoon that had been planned for him. From the first hour the controversy was the story, and Jackson's reaction got the press. Dukakis was wasted in the media by usually supportive commentators and then the party heavies started to complain, not about Bentsen himself but about the effect of the episode on the upcoming campaign. But Dukakis would not relent. He was apparently convinced that the "suburban strategy" his Cambridge political advisers had devised for the election required that he keep his distance from Jackson and that he separate himself from black demands and leftist policies.

But however good the strategy might have looked in theory, the contradictions in its application were devastating. The nonsuburbanites loyal to Jackson might be irrelevant in November (or they might not), but they would not shut up in July. Dukakis was bringing the party to the brink of war here, and that could have ruined his own chances forever. American voters hate a meanie. Suddenly, the Dukakis staff began stroking instead of shucking. Jackson and his people were promised a share of power in the convention and in the campaign, and Dukakis himself said at the triple press conference, "We hope that [Jackson] becomes part of the government in January." The camera shot was set up.

Jackson's extraordinary speech to the convention and the country that Tuesday night confirmed the deal, but it was not an act of surrender. His long call for party unity could also be heard as a confirmation of inclusion, a statement that he and his movement had arrived this summer in Atlanta, as he told a group of supporters earlier in the week, at a place that they, and he, had never been before.

Everything Dukakis said in his triumphant acceptance speech reflected the turn his campaign had taken after the disastrous stiff-arm phase was passed. Suddenly he was open-handed: to a diversity of constituency groups, to the Sandinistas, the "housing activists" and all those campaigning for the social agenda deferred over the past eight years, and perhaps most significantly to his most persistent opponent for the nomination.

Jesse Jackson stood with his family on a parapet adjoining the podium. He had reason enough to be pleased, if not entirely satisfied, with the turn of events. Dukakis had been constrained to accept many of the terms Jackson had established for waging politics more than a year and a half ago: expand the base, include the excluded, think about class, worry about race. Turns may come in the campaign ahead, but for now that direction is set. The Democratic Party is clearly not the party of liberation; for the Jackson forces, however, it is the party of the moment. Jackson indicated the role he and the Rainbow envision for themselves at a meeting here on Friday. "I have to be close enough to Dukakis to serve and far enough to challenge," he said. "Because it requires leadership and street heat to get what we want. We've got to keep on the street heat." The political configura-

WHERE WAS (IS) GEORGE?

In our last issue Joseph McBride reported that Vice President George Bush was referred to in an F.B.I. memo, dated November 29, 1963, as a representative of the C.I.A. Bush, through his press secretary, said he was in the oil business at the time; a C.I.A. spokesman told McBride he would check, and then a day later gave the standard response: "I can neither confirm nor deny."

Last week, however, C.I.A. spokeswoman Sharron Basso told the Associated Press that, yes, there had been a George *William* Bush in the agency, who was apparently not the George H.W. Bush who is running for President. The other George, she said, left the C.I.A. in 1964 to join the Defense Intelligence Agency, and his present whereabouts are unknown. Asked by Sarah Perl of *The Nation* if the agency would offer any proof of George William Bush's employment, a spokesman there said, "You can take my word for it." McBride says, "I stand by my story." Note to George William Bush, wherever you are (if you are): Please call *The Nation*.

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tions of this convention are not graven forever, and the snapshots of summer will surely seem dated and quaint when the new shapes are made.

Corporation Man

Atlanta

Well, let me put it this way—there just ain't a lot of Elvis to Lloyd Bentsen. In Welsh, the word for gray is "lloyd." Mark Russell observed that as long as Bentsen's in Atlanta, he ought to have Ted Turner do colorization on him. Back in 1970, someone in D.C. still suffering from post-Lyndon stress disorder asked the new Senator from Texas if he had any of those alarming cowboy tendencies. Bentsen bestowed upon this citizen a flinty glare and asked, "Do I look like a cowboy?" Some of us from Texas will go a lot further than others to escape the stereotype.

Probably everything you need to know about Bentsen is summed up by the fact that the night Dukakis announced his choice, ABC's *Nightline* had John Connally on the program to speak for Bentsen. Bentsen comes out of the same Tory Democrat mold as Connally, except most of 'em are now, like Connally, Republicans. The only odd thing about Bentsen is that he's still a Democrat. Don't know why. One is always startled to find him voting with the party. Dukakis picked a semi-Republican running mate, which is maybe going a shade far in the centrist direction.

Made all seven of us Texas liberals feel awful queasy. In the old days, when Texas was still a one-party state, if the liberals didn't get locked out of state conventions, we walked out, "rumped," singing to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic": "John Bowden Connally lies a-smouldering in the grass/John Bowden Connally is a goddamn horse's ass." The cause of the split goes back to 1952, when then-Governor Allan Shivers led the Tories in bolting the party and supporting Eisenhower instead of Adlai Stevenson. The "national Democrats" never forgave the Shivercrats, who responded by shutting them out completely: It led to twenty years of charges and countercharges about who was and was not a "real Democrat." Since '52 was before my time, all I can tell you is the August 27, 1952, edition of the McAllen *Valley Evening Monitor*, Lloyd Bentsen's hometown newspaper, carried an eight-column headline that says, "Bentsen Won't Support Stevenson." Next day, the *Valley Morning Star* in Harlingen had the same story:

> EDINBURG, Aug. 27—Rep. Lloyd M. Bentsen, Jr., will go along with Gov. Allan Shivers and Atty. Gen. Price Daniel in splitting with Gov. Adlai Stevenson over the tidelands issue, but said he would "not attempt to tell the rest of the people how to vote."
>
> Bentsen said he could not personally support Stevenson but that "I have every confidence in the voters of Texas to make their own choice.
>
> "I wouldn't be presumptuous enough to try to tell the people of Texas how to vote."

In 1970, Bentsen told *The Texas Observer* the story in the Valley newspaper "is not correct." He said he had voted for Stevenson and sent a telegram to Sam Rayburn pledging his support.

Bentsen is not without redeeming social value. For one thing, he never demagogued about race (well, maybe just a trace), which, for a Texas pol of his generation, is mighty white. One of his more shining moments in recent years was the fight over Robert Bork's nomination. Bentsen not only voted against Bork, he came out against the man very early, helped turn other senators, and did so for a reason that speaks well of him. You may recall that one of Bork's decisions involved a small poll tax some state had left standing and Bork found the tax was not discriminatory. Lloyd Bentsen is from the Rio Grande Valley. He knows what a poll tax is designed to do and how it works. In 1949, when he was a young Congressman, Bentsen voted for a bill to repeal the poll tax. Forty years later, comes Robert Bork with his fancy language and his fancy rationalizations, claiming the poll tax doesn't discriminate. Bentsen wasn't about to vote for that big a fool.

The low point of Bentsen's career was his 1970 primary race against incumbent Senator Ralph Yarborough, the old populist lion from East Texas. The day after it was over Maury Maverick Jr. called Bentsen's vote "anti-nigger, anti-Mexican, anti-young people and sock-it-to-'em in Vietnam." And that's just what Bentsen stirred up—it was ugly, nasty and mean-spirited. Bentsen used the politics of resentment in a way even Phil Gramm must admire. He accused Ralph Yarborough of favoring forced busing, of being against prayer in the schools ("What's wrong with prayer?" asked one of his ads); he used every demagogic trick in the right-wing playbook. His television ads, by the Connally-connected firm of Rives, Dyke in Houston, implied that Yarborough was responsible for the violence at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago and for the street violence during antiwar marches in D.C. Yarborough had endorsed Gene McCarthy in '68 and the Moratorium Against the War. Bentsen's ads showed footage of violence, beatings, sirens and bombs and asked, "Yarborough endorsed [this]. Did he represent your views?"

Bentsen is not a right-winger of the stripe that wants to get the gummint off our backs and that calls for an end to all regulation of bidness. He is of the classic Texas political school that considers government a partner of bidness and believes it is the function of government to help make bidness more profitable.

There's nothing wrong with Lloyd Bentsen by conventional standards—he dresses well (a lot better than Dukakis does), his manners are good, you can take him anywhere, he's not a racist. And even though he's the antithesis of inspirational, he's a good speaker. He has no warmth and he has no humor, but then, neither does Dukakis. The Democratic Party thinks the American people are unwilling to accept Jesse Jackson just a heartbeat away from the presidency but will be happy with a rich, white, corporate servant. That's all.

MOLLY IVINS

Molly Ivins is a columnist for the Dallas Times-Herald.

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Great-Great Uncle Henry

If there's magic in the limpid syllables that form the name Lloyd Bentsen, it seems to have eluded the delegates assembled in Atlanta. Even his supporters had difficulty speaking of the man with any conspicuous joy. This is unfair. Far more than the dreary Dukakis, Bentsen resumes the rich traditions of the Democratic Party. He began his political career calling for a nuclear strike on North Korea and has consumed its most recent portion raking in virtually unparalleled amounts of PAC money while supporting the policies of Ronald Reagan.

Bentsen is the great-great nephew of a Vice President, as he acknowledged in Boston when he said, "I'm delighted to be back in the state where my great-great uncle was a Senator from Massachusetts and became Vice President of the United States of America, and we're out to duplicate that record today." The man in question was Henry Wilson, who served at the elbow of President Grant and whose career is itself richly illustrative of the passions—and principles—of nineteenth-century political life.

He was born very poor, worked as an indentured farm laborer, then as a shoemaker and finally became a successful shoe manufacturer, thus symbolic of Massachusetts' economic history in the days when Route 128 was still but a gleam in the weasel's eye. Unlike his great-great nephew, Henry remained a friend to the working man but made abolition of slavery his central drive. He was initially a Whig, left the party in 1848 when it refused to affirm the Wilmot Proviso (prohibiting slavery in the areas taken from Mexico) and became one of the founders of the Free Soil Party, organized at an 1848 convention in Buffalo and naming Martin Van Buren as its presidential candidate. Many of New York's Democrats defected to the Free Soilers, enough to throw New York to the Republicans and thus give Zachary Taylor the thirty-six electoral votes sufficient to win him the presidency.

Thus far the lesson of Great-Great Uncle Henry is one scarcely appealing to the vociferous proponents in Atlanta of unity-at-all-costs and "reaching out to the moderates." In 1854, Wilson launched himself into national prominence by a somewhat unscrupulous maneuver, joining the American Party, *a k a* the Know-Nothings, who were vying with the new Republican Party for the antislavery standard in Massachusetts. He soon left the party, but not before being elected to the U.S. Senate by a coalition mightily influenced by the Know-Nothings.

As a Senator, Wilson vehemently criticized Andrew Johnson's Reconstruction policies and argued for homesteading of the South, equal rights for blacks and the overturning of privileges enjoyed by the white aristocracy. He took office as Vice President in March 1873, and died in the Capitol on November 22, 1875. Those today invoking a Kennedy-Johnson parallel for Dukakis-Bentsen should proceed with caution.

The battle over Reconstruction bears considering in light of current denunciations of Jesse Jackson's tax-the-rich plan as a form of class war. In the summer of 1867 the Republican Party was split over policy. Charles Sumner had introduced a resolution trying to broaden the scope of Reconstruction by immediately abolishing existing Southern governments, requiring the integration of public schools and providing the newly freed with homesteads. Eric Foner, in his new book, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*, says that "even Radical Henry Wilson objected, declaring 'the terms we have made are hard enough.'" As Foner also says, "To moderates, Sumner's proposals seemed a form of what Sen. James W. Grimes called 'class legislation'—singling out one group of citizens for special government favors. 'That is more than we do for white men,' declared [William] Fessenden in opposing the land proposal. To which Sumner responded, 'White men have never been in slavery.'"

Sumner could have said that government should start redistributing land and wealth for some white folks too, which was what Ben Wade of Kansas was on about, declaring that with the issue of slavery settled, the politicians ought to set their attention to the matter of capital and labor. This was the speech Marx referred to in the first edition of *Capital* as a promising sign. Such talk greatly disturbed *The New York Times*, which in June and July of 1867 began to issue distress signals about the disruptive message land confiscation in the South might send to investors, how it might cripple capital, how demands for same might start up North and then where would the country be? Foner quotes the paper attacking the radicals for desiring "a war on property . . . to succeed the war on Slavery."

In these same months *The Nation* equated Wade's speech with, again to quote Foner, "the confiscation issue, organized labor's demand for an eight-hour day, and the rise of Fenianism among Irish-Americans as illustrations of how 'demagogues' had abandoned 'true radicalism'—equality before the law and equal economic opportunity—in favor of 'special favors for special classes of people.'"

Little has changed. *The New York Times* has run the same sort of editorial without remission for the past 121 years. *The Nation* has come round to the eight-hour day, modifying its position to one of ridicule for the Newspaper Guild's demand that management respect the principle of overtime, while stalling contract negotiations. Politically, neither the wily Navasky nor George Black, the foreign editor, strike me as men disposed to leap into the sabots of Ben Wade. And of course the basic issue of the contest between labor and capital stays off the national agenda, as anyone sitting in Atlanta could rapidly confirm. Jesse Jackson, parts of whose Atlanta speech I liked, said the time had come for the rich to pay for their party, but he also said that it takes two wings to fly and that the hawk can lie down with the dove. That's what happens when you talk too much about u-n-i-t-y, as Great-Great Uncle Henry could have told him.

Sniffy Centrismo

I single out Navasky and Black for specific mention. The former makes no secret of an enthusiasm for Dukismo far greater than that nourished by either Andrew Kopkind or myself. Poor Vic. It's been agony for him to have to publish

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dog's abuse of probably the only man, his former schoolmate at Swarthmore, who might one day invite him to the White House for a New England boiled dinner.

As for G. Black, he's a true apostle of sniffy centrismo, seeing *The Nation*'s role as one of dropping, from time to time, a few pwogwessive opinions into the ear of polite society. He must answer at the bar of history for the July 16/23 *Nation* editorial about a poll taken in Nicaragua under the auspices of the Jesuit-run Central American University (U.C.A.). At the end of statesmanlike observations, the editorial declared:

> There is not much in the poll to cheer the Sandinistas—except for the simple fact of its existence. Unimpeded public opinion polls are, after all, a good yardstick of a functioning democracy. Yet 48 percent of those questioned in the U.C.A. poll, in a straight Yes/No format, said Nicaragua was not democratic. The poll demonstrates again that Nicaragua . . . remains a more doggedly independent, complex and contradictory place than most of us imagine.

The notion of rating democracy by the ability to take unimpeded opinion polls is grotesque, though the U.S. advertising industry would probably applaud the idea. But even accepting such a premise, the editorial abused democratic free exchange of information by suppressing most of what the poll actually revealed.

Readers may be interested to know that more than one-third of the respondents to the poll are "bedrock supporters" of the Sandinistas; 43 percent backed the draft and 57 percent backed continued Sandinista control of the army. Despite the government's low marks for its handling of the economy—not surprising, considering the situation—65 percent thought "the government wants to solve the economic problems of the population."

The editorial correctly reported that 48 percent said the country is not democratic. It did not report that 40 percent rated the country democratic, and that the pollsters admit that the choice was crudely posed, since "any doubt in a respondent's mind about Nicaragua being democratic" led to his or her answer being classified as No. They also noted, "A majority of Nicaraguans see their nation moving toward greater democracy." A useful gauge of "democracy" is a population's willingness to discuss highly charged political issues. Interviewers in this poll judged that 77 percent of Nicaraguans responded to questions "without apparent fear or distrust," and a commentary accompanying the poll stated that the "biggest problem during many interviews was the tendency of respondents to want to amplify their answers, causing delay in completing the interview." By the second day of the poll, the refusal rate was below 5 percent, "very low by Central American standards." In El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, pollsters encountered "very serious difficulties." "Given the present context," the report concluded, "the degree of open political debate in Nicaragua today is remarkable."

None of this enlightening material found haven in the *Nation* editorial. Nor, needless to say, did the fact that to the question "Which is the country most in solidarity with Nicaragua?" 56 percent named either the Soviet Union or Cuba.

The Poisoned Well

The name LeMoyne may drag a groan from your throats given the protracted exchange between him and me in these pages a few weeks ago, but his stories from Central America contain inaccuracies so egregious that they would provoke serious suspicions in a soul less charitable than mine.

Let's take his dispatch from San Salvador in *The New York Times* for June 26. It reviewed the strategic and tactical options facing the "guerrilla commanders" in El Salvador, finding that the rebels' political popularity has slipped. As evidence for this he wrote that the main labor federation in support of the F.M.L.N./F.D.R., the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (U.N.T.S. in its Spanish abbreviation), held a May Day march this year that "attracted perhaps 3,000 supporters," in contrast to a total of "perhaps 40,000" at a similar march in 1986.

Leaving aside the fact that no public rally can accurately measure guerrilla support, the figure of 3,000 is remarkable. Reporters from A.P., U.P.I. and Reuters all reckoned a turnout of 20,000, as did the May 4 edition of *Processo*, a weekly out of Central American University, and Marc Cooper, who was present with a team filming the march for a documentary recently aired on PBS's *Frontline*. In proposing a turnout almost seven times lower than that reported by others on the scene, LeMoyne's story avoided significant detail. The night before the march alone approximately 3,000 people had gathered at the National University alone. Most were *campesinos* who had come to San Salvador a day or two early, expecting that on May Day the army would keep demonstrators away by blocking the major roads into the city, which turned out to be the case. LeMoyne said nothing of this tactic, nor did he mention government intimidation that might have affected turnout. In the past fifteen months, according to Americas Watch, fifteen unionists have been assassinated, six have disappeared and others have been arrested and beaten. In the two months preceding the march the government conducted a major propaganda campaign against the U.N.T.S., linking it with the guerrillas and civilian deaths. Two days before the march the union's offices were bombed. And during the final rally in the Plaza Libertad, at least one military helicopter hovered overhead. A.P. and Reuters noted the obstructive actions of the armed forces and, along with U.P.I., reported the bombing and the menacing helicopter.

In his zeal for dramatic contrast LeMoyne says that 40,000 attended the 1986 march, thus revising his own count of 15,000 to 25,000, noted in *The New York Times* for May 2, 1986. He says nothing about the march of 1987, perhaps because it injures his thesis of the left in decline. *Processo* placed the 1987 turnout at 10,000, a figure supported by Reuters, with A.P. estimating 6,000. If LeMoyne had given a fair account of the march, the discussion could have been headed "Support for Rebel-Linked Union Doubles Despite Army Scare Tactics," but I'm sure he felt *The Times* would not care for him to see things that way.

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN AND JEFFERSON MORLEY

■ *Nation* to Adelman: Drop NED

The board of the National Endowment for Democracy recently considered the pending nomination of Kenneth Adelman, a protégé of Jeane Kirkpatrick and head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency through many of the Reagan years. As the NED brass discussed Adelman's nomination, submitted by NED president Carl Gershman, someone distributed a *Nation* article reporting on Adelman's speech to a conservative conference last February [see Corn, "Fear and Loathing in Washington," March 5]. Adelman had pandered to the approving claque at the Conservative Political Action Conference, suggesting that liberals are communists and describing House Speaker Jim Wright as a "traitor" for his work on the Central America peace plan. Those remarks didn't go over well with the Democratic members of the bipartisan NED board, according to our sources in the organization. Adelman's nomination, the sources say, was placed on hold, pending verification of the *Nation* story.

The slippery Gershman, himself a former aide to Kirkpatrick, listened to a tape-recording of Adelman's speech and blithely assured the NED board there was nothing disturbing on it. "It looked like the Adelman nomination would go ahead," according to a high-ranking NED source. But one Democratic board member took the precaution of personally reviewing the tape and came away outraged by Adelman's comments. Other board members were notified and had similar reactions. The Adelman nomination now seems to be dead.

Gershman, though, hasn't given up. He had proposed Adelman as an ideological counterweight to the nomination of former Representative Michael Barnes, a liberal Democrat. "Adelman was his price for bringing Barnes on," a NED source notes. Once the board put Adelman on indefinite hold, Gershman did the same to Barnes. There's no equal opportunity at NED for liberal interventionists.

■ Bush's Environmental Thing

George Bush not only wants to be the "education President"; he also says he will be the environmental President. "I think for too long we've given the playing field away to the Democrats on the environment," Bush declared before the California primary. "I want to make the environment a Republican issue." So he can't be too pleased with the grade the League of Conservation Voters has assigned his environmental record—D plus. And the Sierra Club, noting that Bush had a good record with regard to public lands and wildlife when he was in Congress twenty years ago, says he long ago shifted course. It assails Bush for his role as chair of the Presidential Task Force on Regulatory Relief, which has advocated weakening or abolishing a variety of environmental regulations.

Dukakis is no environmental hero either, though he fared much better in the league's rating, with a B. The Sierra Club lauds the Masssachusetts Governor for blocking the Seabrook nuclear plant, banning carcinogenic pesticides and battling offshore drilling. But it faults the Duke for "sometimes poor" implementation of environmental programs, "weak appointments" to key posts, deference to development interests and cautiousness toward environmental programs that might upset business. As for the monochrome Lloyd Bentsen, the league says, on the basis of his 1985-86 voting record, that he is "neither a hero nor a zero."

■ Apartheid on $357 a Day

On the right, financial speculators who admire South Africa are continually mining conservative mailing lists to push various investment offers (usually involving precious metals), financial newsletters and seminars. Take Donald McAlvany, president of International Collectors Associates, a precious metals firm, and chair of the Council on Southern Africa. He has joined with Howard Phillips, chair of the Conservative Caucus, in organizing a "geopolitical/financial tour" of South Africa.

All you need is about $5,000 and you too can spend two weeks in the apartheid state—meeting government officials, inspecting an arms factory, taking a "red carpet tour" of a gold mine and chatting with financial leaders. Naturally, the entourage will get a chance to play in Sun City. And Howard Phillips will give a briefing on what's going on in Washington. All this, a solicitation for the trip says, will provide "insights about the real situation in South Africa, the misunderstanding from the international world, and the continued Soviet-backed influence aimed at toppling our most strategic friend and ally." As if that's not enough for five grand, the brochure promises that "an understanding of geopolitics will help expand your international investment horizons." If you buy Phillips's line on apartheid, you may be interested in McAlvany's line of precious metals.

■ Drug-Testing Congress

Pete Stark, the Democratic Congressman from California, recently distributed "A Drug Test for Members of Congress." Test results have not yet been tallied, but few members are expected to pass. In May the Senate approved expanding the role of the military in the drug war by an 83–6 vote, so sober judgment is obviously not a common trait on Capitol Hill. The test consists of twenty multiple-choice questions. For instance, what Administration official said the following about military involvement in drug interdiction: "Terrible national security policy, poor politics and a guaranteed failure"?

(a) Samuel Pierce
(b) John Poindexter
(c) Caspar Weinberger
(d) Edwin Meese

(Answer below)

■ Advance Headlines From the Dukakis Era

LEFTIST INSURRECTION IN SAN SALVADOR
D'Aubuisson Requests Quick U.S. Arms
White House Split; VP Urges Action

Correct answer is (c)

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ARTICLES.

SECURITIES EXCHANGE

Don't Let Banks Play the Market

HERMAN GOLD

The Senate has passed, 94-2, and Congress might yet O.K., legislation that will put the hapless taxpayer in the position of having to come up with billions of extra dollars to rescue high-rolling speculators in the money industry. Moreover, the bill will create one of the most God-awful corporate lobbies imaginable.

What prompted the new legislation is the banks' desire to get into the securities business. Conversely, securities firms want to get into banking. Congress is working on new regulations that will grant both these wishes—and why not? Deregulation has arguably been a success in lowering costs of trucking, air travel and long-distance telephone service. Banks and securities firms are private businesses too, and it seems only fair to let them and the rest of us profit by some competition. Unfortunately for the U.S. taxpayer, the matter is not quite so simple.

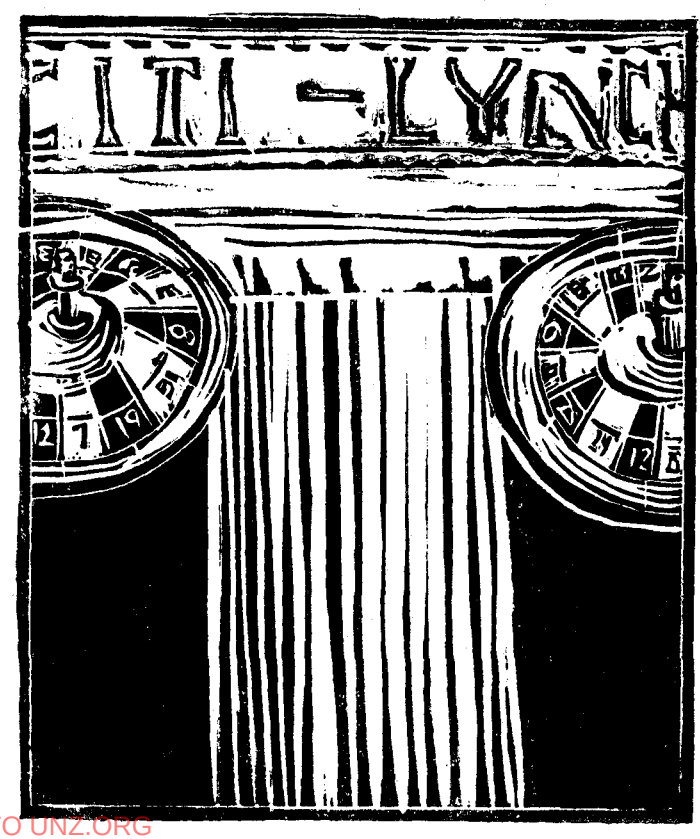
The first step toward understanding what's at stake is to recognize an important difference between banks and securities firms: Although both are private businesses trying to make a profit for stockholders, banks do business with a government guarantee. Bank depositors are insured against losses by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. How banks came to have at least some of their liabilities insured by the taxpayer is an interesting piece of history.

The F.D.I.C. came into existence with the passage of the Glass-Steagall Act, on June 16, 1933. Congress enacted this legislation to end a wave of bank runs and, more generally, to encourage the public to entrust its money to U.S. banks. Even a sound and well-managed bank could be forced to close if rumors led a large portion of its depositors to demand their money in a short period of time. Bank closings were a loss to the community in which the bank operated and a threat to commerce.

Glass-Steagall provided government insurance for deposits of up to $2,500 (now $100,000). In return for Federal support for their liabilities, banks were required to do business under government regulation. The regulations enacted were designed to save banks (and the taxpayer) from the frauds and risks of the securities markets. In the aftermath of the crash of 1929, Wall Street was seen as a kind of grand casino in which gamblers played with other people's money. Such disparate political figures as Democratic Senator Carter Glass and Republican Herbert Hoover agreed that banks should not risk taxpayers' money in this casino. Glass-Steagall and subsequent legislation allowed banks to buy and sell stocks and bonds for customers' demands and to make long-term investments in bonds for their own accounts, but it barred short-term trading of most securities, and explicitly forbade banks to underwrite corporate offerings.

What does it mean to underwrite a corporate stock or bond offering? Today, it means that one or a few large firms guarantee a certain price to the issuing company, and make a profit to the extent that they can sell (distribute) the offering at a price higher than the guaranteed one. If they cannot sell the entire offering, they swallow the loss. This kind of high-profile, high-risk, high-profit transaction is considered the apex of the securities business.

Until recent years banks were relatively uninterested in securities trading and corporate underwriting, but they are now racing to get into the action. The reason for the rush is a trend usually referred to as "securitization," which has brought about a change in the way credit is pumped through the body economic. In its narrow definition, securitization means pooling debt to be sold as a security—mortgages, for instance, are pooled and sold to pension funds rather than held by banks. More generally, securitization means lenders and borrowers meet directly in securities markets. Rather than raising money by borrowing from banks, large corporations sell bonds and short-term I.O.U.s directly to the public. The agents of these public offerings are securities firms, which can underwrite new issues. In 1986, U.S. corporations did almost 50 percent of their fund-raising in the securities markets. As recently as 1979 the proportion was



DRAWINGS BY FRANCES JETTER

Herman Gold is the pseudonym of a group of authors, which includes an economist, an attorney and two concerned academics.

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less than 40 percent. The long-term implications of this trend are not yet clear, since corporations relied on the securities markets for 45 to 50 percent of their funding in the 1950s without driving their bankers out of business. Nevertheless, bankers are worried about the competition.

Securitization reduces corporate costs by cutting out the banker middleman between borrowing corporations and those with funds. From one point of view, this is good news for all of us. Lower transaction costs mean a lower cost of funds for the corporation, a better return for the provider of funds and a more efficient economic engine for the United States. Banks, however, would like to pursue their lost business into the securities markets. That is why they have been lobbying for abolition of the Glass-Steagall regulations.

Behind this rationale lies another one the banks don't like to talk about: They are in financial trouble because they loaned too many billions to Mexico, Brazil and other less-developed countries, which can afford to pay only a fraction of the interest on their huge debts. Most of these loans are carried on the banks' books as assets, thanks to the cooperation of Federal bank examiners and indeed the whole U.S. financial and political establishment. If these loans were recognized as losses, many of the largest banks in the country would have to declare bankruptcy. Thus, financial insiders quietly argue that banks should be allowed and even encouraged to go into the securities market so that income from the new business can help them recapitalize.

Banks, then, have two good reasons for wanting unlimited access to the securities markets. But why are securities firms so eager to go into banking? The answer becomes clear if one examines more closely what a banking charter is worth. In addition to access to the F.D.I.C., a bank has access to the payment clearinghouse that is connected to the Federal Reserve Bank as a lender of last resort. The clearinghouse (the Fedwire network, automated clearinghouses and check-clearing arrangements) enables a bank to pay checks and other claims against its accounts before it receives the corresponding payment from the account holder. A conclusive resolution of transactions at the end of each day (finality of payment) is a boon to commerce, but occasionally requires a bank to draw overnight loans of large size from one of the Federal Reserve Banks to cover the difference between claims paid and accounts due. In emergencies this access to the Federal Reserve as lender of last resort can become very important indeed. When a computer system of the Bank of New York crashed in 1985, the bank borrowed $23 billion overnight from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to settle its accounts.

Access to the payment clearinghouse and to the Federal Reserve, like access to the F.D.I.C., provides government support for the convenience and security of the banking business. So just as banks want to become universal financial institutions by adding securities trading and corporate underwriting, securities firms want to become universal financial institutions by buying banks or pieces of banks to gain access to the Federal Reserve payments mechanism.

The competing ambitions of banks and securities firms are represented by powerful lobbying efforts orchestrated by the American Bankers Association (A.B.A.) and the Securities Industry Association (S.I.A.). Among corporate political action committees, twelve of the top fifty spenders are banks or securities firms (e.g., the Morgan Stanley Better Government Fund). The impact of these lobbying efforts in Congress has so far been limited by the fact that the two groups have been working against each other. The most important item on the A.B.A.'s agenda is new legislation that would permit banks to underwrite securities. And the most important item on the S.I.A.'s list is blocking banks from underwriting securities. But now Congress is considering a compromise in which new banking regulations will permit each side to engage in the other's business, and some such deal is likely to become law unless taxpayers oppose it.

The potential importance of the new banking statutes has not escaped the relevant Congressional committees, but Congressional concerns are focused on two relatively narrow issues. One is antitrust. Regulations are being drafted that will limit the size of the new universal financial institutions. Citicorp, for instance, will not be allowed to buy Merrill Lynch, or vice versa. The other issue is how to prevent the spread of government involvement in the whole financial system—the access to the F.D.I.C., the payments system and the discount window of the Federal Reserve—so that those who own banks cannot take government along with them into the risks of the securities business. It will not be easy to draw a line that will confine government support to only one part of a single financial institution.

Let us suppose, however, that clever drafting of new banking regulations can prevent monopolistic combinations and avoid a blanket taxpayer guarantee of the finances of full-service institutions. There remain two important long-term concerns not being adequately addressed in the Congress or elsewhere.

The first concern is the financial health of banks. Their troubles are real but the proposed solution—letting them compete without trammel in the securities markets—is an illusory one. Big-bank exposure from bad loans (for empty shopping centers and mothballed drilling rigs, as well as loans to Brazil and Mexico) exceeds $100 billion. The potential income from the securities business is not nearly large enough to wipe out these bad debts on bank balance sheets. As a rough estimate of the additional revenues and profits available, consider the earnings of the large investment firms and the national full-line securities houses. Underwriting revenues for them in 1986 (their best year ever) reached almost $5 billion, and trading revenues about $10 billion. With other revenues, these produced a pretax profit of less than $4 billion. Clearly, even a substantial portion of this profit would not take the banks very far toward covering their bad loans. And it is by no means clear that banks can count on making a profit. Newcomers in any business tend to drive profits down, and hiring personnel with the skills required to handle the new business would be a serious up-front cost for the banks.

And while profits may be less than anticipated, the risks may prove higher. Securities firms have been taking greater

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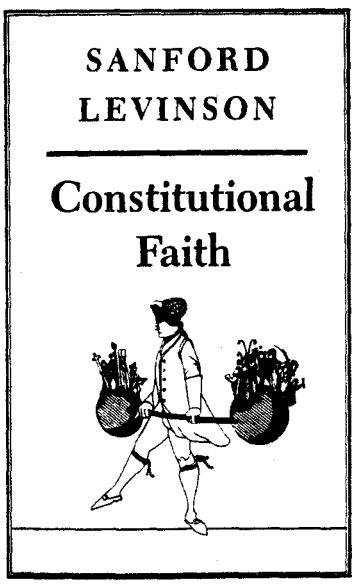

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risks of late to keep their bottom line growing. The four U.S. underwriters of the British government's stake in British Petroleum lost almost $100 million each when the market collapsed last October, even after the British government intervened (reportedly under prodding from the U.S. Treasury) to limit losses. The U.S. underwriters were victims of bad timing, of course, but the size of the bet each made was in line with the current market practice of concentrating risk and return in underwriting.

Concern for the financial health of banks unleashed to find new types of business should also be sharpened by a recent experiment. Between 1980 and 1982, Savings and Loan Associations (S&Ls) in the United States were caught between rising interest rates, which had to be paid to keep their depositors, and much lower yields of mortgages they had already locked in. Their crisis was successfully represented to Congress, which, after due deliberation, offered guarantees of solvency and liberalized the laws that had largely limited S&Ls to mortgage financing. While the intention of the Garn-St. Germain Act of 1982 was to help the thrifts get through their earnings crisis, the result, unfortunately, was much different. Some S&Ls turned themselves around and returned to profitability, but many went from crisis to disaster in trying to compete in unfamiliar kinds of business. Most of the failing thrifts across the nation have been bailed out by state and Federal insurance—that is, at the expense of the taxpayer. The same result is likely to occur on an even greater scale if banks are encouraged to enter the corporate securities markets.

Nor can it be argued that the securities business is on its way to much greater revenues and profits that could in the future save the banks. In fact, the recent downturn in business for securities firms has led them to fire many of the younger people so recently recruited on $100,000 salaries. Booming profits for securities firms between 1982 and 1986 may have been the upside of a cycle rather than the stable trend that many took it to be. Regulators may do the banks a favor by keeping them out of the securities market until it is clearer what the future holds for this business. As recently as last October 19, many Americans were glad to turn to their banks for refuge from the turmoil of the market.

Another concern about the universal financial institution is the political power of the new beast. Wall Street today does not speak with one voice to Congress and the voters. Indeed, as already remarked, the banking and securities industries have spent a great deal of money in opposing each other on Glass-Steagall, and this fight is only the most recent indication of the division of interest between banks and securities firms. It is arguable whether the strictures of Glass-Steagall have saved any banks from securities losses since 1933, or even whether these rules would have saved them from securities losses had they been in force in 1929. But it is clear that Glass-Steagall has benefited the nation in general and Congress in particular by separating two major kinds of financial interests, with the result that each is always available with expertise and lobbying on the Hill when Congress considers regulating the other. This division would be knit together in the universal financial institution that Congress now considers allowing. For instance, analysts for securities firms, who argue that the national interest requires something other than throwing International Monetary Fund money and Baker plan nostrums at poor-country debtors would be silenced if they themselves were on the large banks' payrolls.

Imagine a single organization with the clout of the A.B.A. and the S.I.A. combined, an organization that can lobby single-mindedly for the interests of the U.S. financial community. We may soon need to ask if what's good for financial services is good for the nation. What would be at the top of the agenda of a political constituency that combines the interests of banks and securities firms? The obvious answer is, changing the line dividing government insurance for bank deposits from the other and riskier aspects that a universal financial institution would engage in. However carefully drawn this line might be as it emerges from Congressional deliberation, the unbalanced power of the A.B.A. and the S.I.A. combined would sooner or later succeed in moving it further in the direction of greater government backing for private financial interests.

Wider government involvement is a safety net that will inevitably incline financial decision-makers to take more risks. The goal of any corporate decision-maker is to achieve a situation in which profits are the corporation's and losses are someone else's. There is an extent to which banks already have this situation, and none are eager to give it up. As a corporation, any bank can decide tomorrow to give up banking and move unfettered into the securities business. None have done so, and none are likely to do so. Securities firms that covet banks are further indication of the value attached by the market to the special quasi-governmental nature of banks' status.

There is a good chance taxpayers will have to pick up the losses if banks rush into the securities business—in addition to the losses banks may soon have to write down on their foreign loans. Irritating as the current spate of bailouts is ($4 billion for farm credit, $11 billion for the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation, $3 billion for Eximbank), they are relatively small change for the taxpayer ($1 billion is $10 per taxpayer in a 100 million taxpayer polity) and, accordingly, easy for a member of Congress to vote for. But if the government is called upon to fund a bail-

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by Gene Lyons

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out of the commercial banking system, the necessary commitment could be over $1,000 per taxpayer ($100 billion). Then there is the long-term prospect of a financial community unified in pressing its interest against the general interest, especially in broadening the definition of risk-taking activities that taxpayers should guarantee. This is not a kind of fairness to the banks that we can afford. □

GOOD FRIENDS IN EL SALVADOR

The Vanishing Kidnap Plot

JEFFERSON MORLEY

A plot to kidnap U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Edwin Corr and hold him for a $5 million ransom was uncovered in early May, according to State Department cables. The plotters, employees of a Miami-based security firm responsible for guarding Corr's residence in San Salvador, expected to be assisted in the kidnapping by right-wing "urban commandos," according to the cables. At least three right-wing Salvadoran suspects were investigated, but apparently were not formally reprimanded. The State Department refuses to discuss the results of its probe, citing a policy of not commenting on security matters.

The story of the Corr plot is a useful counterpoint to the increasingly threadbare myth of El Salvador as a bipartisan foreign policy success story. In fact, the far right is more entrenched now in El Salvador than it has been at any time in the past decade. If the U.S. Ambassador is not immune from the threat of right-wing terrorism, then few Salvadorans can consider themselves safe.

The Corr plot is the unsurprising result of U.S. policy over the past eight years—a policy that depends on appeasing the Salvadoran right. It marks the fourth time in as many years that the Reagan Administration has felt obliged to tolerate brazen criminal conspiracies in El Salvador.

The first two instances occurred in the summer of 1984. In May of that year, the U.S. intelligence apparatus learned that Salvadoran politician Roberto d'Aubuisson, a favorite of American right-wingers like Jack Kemp, was plotting to assassinate Ambassador Thomas Pickering. But the firebomb intended for Pickering blew up in the hands of one of d'Aubuisson's associates. Incredibly enough, the badly burned would-be assassin was flown on a U.S. helicopter to an Army hospital in San Antonio. After a month of treatment, the bomber walked out on a $78,910 hospital bill, since picked up by American taxpayers.

The details of the Pickering plot were then leaked to the press, probably by State Department officials. Senior White House officials mildly criticized d'Aubuisson, but the assassins were not deterred. Within weeks a second plot against Pickering was disclosed, and the Ambassador had to travel under heavy guard. Yet d'Aubuisson continued to enjoy the tacit support of the Reagan Administration. In June 1984, even after sanctioning two assassination plots, he was granted a visa to visit the United States. The Democratic-controlled Congress, euphoric over the election of José Napoleón Duarte a month earlier, appeared not even to notice, much less object.

The Reagan Administration's handling of the Pickering plot sent a clear political message to the Salvadoran regime: Criminal activity in the highest circles of the government will not be tolerated under any circumstance. Wink, wink.

When a Salvadoran lieutenant colonel named Roberto Mauricio Staben, who had excellent C.I.A. contacts, got the message from Washington, the result was a third episode of appeasing terrorists. Staben, a favorite of U.S. military advisers, was active in the Administration's clandestine efforts to arm the *contras*. In April 1986 he and a number of his underlings were caught running a kidnapping-for-profit ring that preyed on El Salvador's entrepreneurial class. At first, the U.S. Embassy announced that it was supporting the investigation into Staben's kidnapping ring, and there was briefly talk in San Salvador and Washington that the Salvadoran armed forces might be held accountable for human rights abuses.

It was Corr, ironically enough, who signaled that the United States would not take action against professional kidnappers. Within weeks of the initial arrests, Staben refused to be questioned and his fellow military officers supported him. Their position was reinforced when three eyewitnesses in the case were killed in custody. By then Corr and the State Department were already backpedaling.

To reporters in San Salvador, the Ambassador downplayed the importance of the kidnapping ring as a test of the Salvadoran government. In a "not for attribution" interview with me in Washington, a high-level "informed source" familiar with the kidnapping investigation repeatedly tried to mislead me about the collapse of the case. Staben, the source told me, was a mischievous but tolerable fellow.

Corr, now facing the threat of abduction himself, is "definitely not interested in talking about the plot," according to his press spokesman. Two State Department officials familiar with the case justify Corr's silence by saying that the kidnapping plot was not really serious. They also cast doubt on the reliability of the information and claim that the Salvadoran security guards had merely been engaged in idle after-hours speculation, not in laying a well-developed scheme.

These claims, however, are not fully consistent with the report of State Department security officials. Their cables did not question the informant's reliability and were taken seriously enough for Corr's security to be tightened.

In any case, the State Department ought to be able to explain the Corr plot in more detail. If, on the one hand, it was not serious, the full story can be told, so as to dispel suspicions that it was a sequel to the Pickering plot and the Staben kidnapping ring. If, on the other hand, the plot was serious and was thwarted, why not publicize the effectiveness of U.S. internal security measures to help deter future threats?

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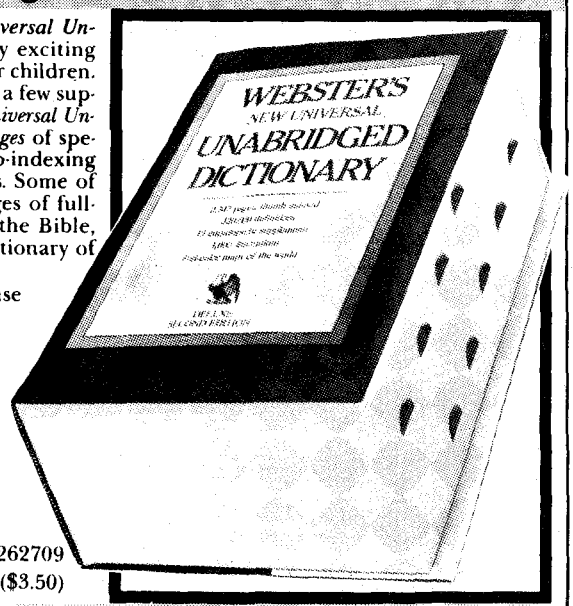

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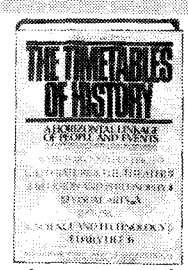

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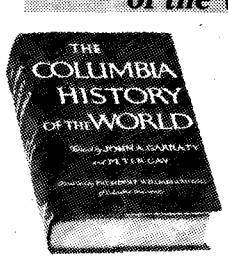

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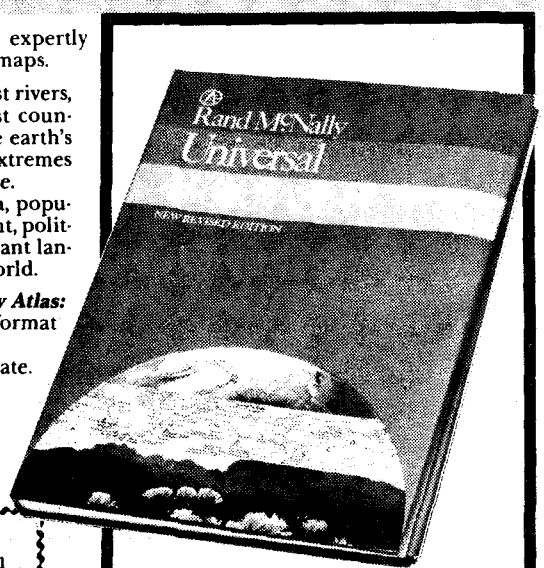

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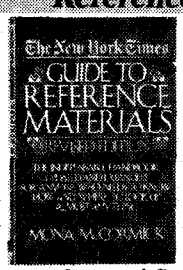

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In truth, the case is too sensitive to discuss publicly. The security firm in question, the Wackenhut Corporation, is politically well connected. The owners of its Salvadoran subsidiary, Wackenhut El Salvador S.A., include former high-ranking Salvadoran military officers. The parent company in Miami provides security services to at least four other U.S. Embassies. Wackenhut, described in its 1987 annual report as "one of the world's largest and most diversified international security and investigative organizations," also enjoys warm relations with the U.S. intelligence community. Among its directors emeritus are former directors of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Wackenhut's security services in El Salvador had already come in for criticism earlier this year. A senior State Department inspection team visited the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador last winter and cited numerous contract violations by Wackenhut. The inspectors recommended that the department reduce its payments to the firm. According to one State Department official, an unspecified number of security guards were dismissed as a result.

The whereabouts of the exonerated kidnapping suspects are not known. Officials in the State Department and the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador refuse to say whether they remain on the job. Fernando Carrizosa, a top Wackenhut official, says only that none of the firm's employees in El Salvador have been dismissed because of any purported plot.

But Leonel Gómez, a respected Salvadoran political analyst with contacts across El Salvador's political spectrum, believes the suspects have probably been killed. Gómez, while acknowledging he has no direct proof of murder, says flatly of two of the plotters, "They're dead. This is a rerun of the Staben case. As soon as the Salvadoran armed forces found out that the Americans were on to the plot, they killed these guys to keep them from talking." State Department officials dismiss the idea that the suspects have been killed, but offer no alternative information regarding their whereabouts.

The Reagan Administration, the Democratic-controlled Congress and the intelligence community are now seeing the results of their silence on the Pickering plot and the Staben kidnapping ring. Yet they all have an incentive to keep quiet about even the possibility of a threat to Corr. Many people in Washington continue to insist that U.S. policy in El Salvador is a bipartisan success story. Others might note that "success" in El Salvador has once again required bipartisan submission to a not particularly subtle form of blackmail. □

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LETTER FROM EUROPE

All Power to The Soviets

DANIEL SINGER

Historically, the errors committed by a truly revolutionary movement are infinitely more fruitful than the infallibility of the cleverest central committee. —*Rosa Luxemburg*

Four days that fascinated the Soviet people. But did those four days shake them out of apathy and skepticism; did they convince them, after so many disappointed hopes, to try once again to take their destiny into their own hands? And is it possible to transfer "all power to the soviets" from above, under full party supervision? Is it conceivable that the party apparatus will preside over the limitation of its own prerogatives? Or, to put it differently, can socialist democracy be combined with a one-party state? These are some of the questions and contradictions that sprang to mind as the 4,991 delegates were leaving the glass hall in the Kremlin on July 1, at the close of the really extraordinary Nineteenth All-Union Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which ended symbolically with the decision to erect in Moscow a monument to the victims of Stalinism. (The third time, incidentally, that this decision has been taken, but it looks like third time lucky.)

The Russians, and the world at large, were astonished. Most speakers stressed the fact that their country had not known anything of the kind for some sixty years. In Stalin's time heretics were sent to Siberia, and discussion, therefore, was stifled by fear. ("I gave him a quotation, he replied with a reference," one bitter joke claimed—bitter because *ssylka* in Russian means both "reference" and "deportation.") Relative freedom under Nikita Khrushchev did not last long enough to consolidate the habit and, although repression could not be compared with that of Stalin's time, the reign of Leonid Brezhnev was one of conformity. Hence the contrast. No wonder Soviet citizens rushed for their newspapers and were glued to their TV screens. For them the performance was unprecedented.

They could see, on one hand, say, Mikhail Ulyanov, a famous actor, pleading eloquently for a world in which

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s Europe correspondent and the author of* Is Socialism Doomed? The Meaning of Mitterrand *(Oxford University Press).*

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people would not be "mute cogs," where "talent and labor are more prized than a position on the *nomenklatura*," attacking bureaucrats preoccupied merely with "clinging to posts from which they can issue commands" and then explaining why people should lose "faith in anything, seeing the universal lies and thievery." And they could watch, on the other hand, the Slavophile Yuri Bondarev vituperating against a press that "destroys, denigrates" and seizes this opportunity "for the revision of faith and morality"; a Bondarev complaining that words like "fatherland" or "patriotism" provoke "serpentine hissing" and defining the motto of the critics as "let all weeds bloom and let all evil forces contend."

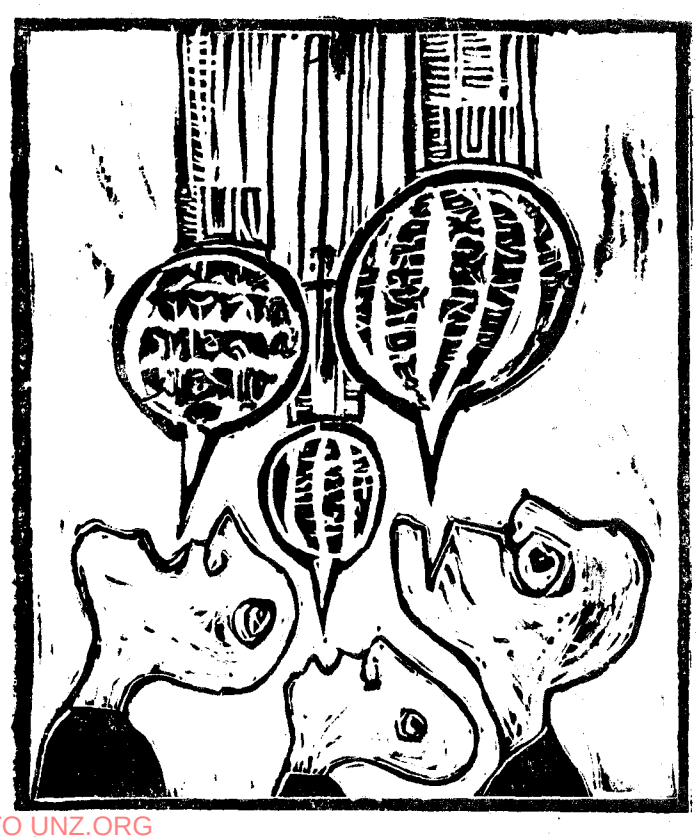
The viewers could see a Moscow party boss, reciting self-praise as in the good old days, driven from the platform with mock applause. They could watch the now-famous scene when the delegate from the cold climate of the Komi S.S.R., arguing that those responsible for stagnation should be kicked out of their jobs, was asked by Gorbachev to name names and replied without hesitation, "I would include comrade M.S. Solomentsev, above all, and comrades A.A. Gromyko, V.G. Afanasiev, G.A. Arbatov and others" (that is to say, a member of the Politburo and the current President, sitting on the platform with Gorbachev, and the editor of *Pravda* and the head of the Institute of American and Canadian Studies, both delegates sitting in the hall). One could add to these highlights the confrontation between the downgraded Boris Yeltsin, who appeared rather ill at ease, and Yegor Ligachev, who was in fine form.

Not everything, however, was so new and so original. The conference itself had been improvised. The Central Committee's theses, or suggestions for revision, were published late, leaving barely a month for study and discussion. Though there was choice this time and elections were freer than before, the organized apparatchiks knew in many cases how to manipulate the result. The conference against bureaucracy was packed with bureaucrats. Naturally, nobody spoke against *perestroika* as such. Yet you could easily distinguish those whose enthusiasm for reform was restrained. They loudly applauded all references to the dangerously irresponsible press, to "loudmouths who are parading through the streets with dubious slogans" or to the exaggerated emphasis on the seamy side of the Soviet past. They also applauded a delegate's tribute to Andrei Gromyko in reply to the above-mentioned attack. But more worrisome still was a point to which we shall return: the awareness that the movement from below is still too inarticulate, that people only open up when they are prompted from above.

The proof of the *perestroika* pudding is in the eating, and most criticism centered on shortages of food, of consumer goods and more generally on the insufficient results of the economic reform. Gorbachev, referring wittily to the very many who are still "faithful servants of his majesty gross output," did not conceal the fact that his economic reform program is still in its infancy and that progress so far has been very disappointing. But he argued that further advance depends on political transformation, that nothing will be achieved until the party relinquishes its stranglehold on society, allowing the latter to manage its own affairs through its own institutions, the soviets. These elected councils, supposedly the main organs of state power from the local to the national level, have really been rubber-stamp institutions. This is plain fact, not slander. (A contributor to *Pravda* making this point on June 12 quoted two members of the Supreme Soviet: "We arrive in Moscow, get to the Kremlin, examine matters that have been prepared by the apparatus and have essentially been decided in advance," says one. "And our vote is invariably unanimous," adds the second.)

Gorbachev proposes that these bodies should have genuine elections and real powers to run the state at all levels, including the very highest. Some 1,500 deputies are to be elected, as now, on a national and territorial basis. To these will be added 750 deputies elected by trade unions, women's organizations, youth groups, cooperatives and other associations. Together the 2,250 deputies will form "the supreme body of state power—the Congress of U.S.S.R. People's Deputies," meeting once a year to decide key issues. They, in turn, will elect a smaller permanent parliament, or Supreme Soviet, of some 400 to 450 deputies, divided into a Soviet of the Union and a Soviet of Nationalities. The congress will also elect a chair of the Supreme Soviet—that is to say the country's president, no longer a figurehead but someone who would have vast prerogatives over foreign policy and defense, a leader heading the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, appointing the prime minister and so on.

It is taken for granted that, by the autumn of next year, Gorbachev himself will be the first to occupy this crucial office. The combined leadership of party and state is not in itself surprising, since it would protect him against the risk of his Politburo colleagues ditching him, as their predeces-



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sors did Khrushchev. But this is not a decision affecting an individual. Quite the contrary. The selection of party secretaries as chairs of the soviets is to be the rule at all levels, from top to bottom. Thus, the long-awaited separation of powers between state and party is coupled with the reassertion of the dominant role of the latter, without a clear explanation of the reason. In his important second intervention at the conference, Gorbachev cleverly criticized Leonid Abalkin, head of the Economics Institute of the Academy of Sciences, for underestimating the supremacy of politics. He probably resented most Abalkin's plain question—"Are we capable of insuring the democratic organization of public life while preserving the Soviet organization of society and the one-party system?"—and Abalkin's doubts on the wisdom of uniting the leadership of the party and the soviets in the same hands. Gorbachev justified the measure on the essential ground that the presence of the first secretary at its head would give the soviets necessary power. At the same time, his re-election would give the party secretary additional prestige. All this does not seem to be sufficient reason for letting the party back in through the window, having just removed it through the door.

The party must preside over this transformation, it could be argued, because the movement from below is still too weak. This conference was preceded by a traumatic experience. On March 13, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* published the letter of one Nina Andreyeva, which was seen as the manifesto of the conservatives. On April 5 *Pravda* published an editorial that was hailed as the reply of the reformers [see Dev Murarka, "The Foes of *Perestroika* Sound Off," *The Nation*, May 21]. But in the intervening three weeks only one provincial paper had dared to protest. The eloquent silence of the rest is haunting the reformers and, at the conference, the actor Ulyanov expressed their anguish: "The fact that we were scared by her letter, this is what is terrifying. . . . Even though their hearts might have been aching, the overwhelming majority were rooted to the spot and awaited directives. They realized that this was wrong, but they waited, they trembled but waited patiently, obediently and with a sense of foreboding."

The other possible explanation is that a deal had been struck. The economic reform, combined with the new prerogative for the soviets, will deprive the party apparatus of its direct control over the economy and, therefore, of a great deal of its power. To convince the apparatchiks that the term "vanguard" has not become an empty one, it may have been necessary to bestow on the party the leadership of the soviets, preserving at the same time its control over key appointments of cadres (though the size of this *nomenklatura* will inevitably be cut by the reforms). The idea of a compromise was strengthened by the performance at the conference of Yegor Ligachev, generally viewed as expressing the interests and apprehensions of the party apparatus.

Ligachev's speech, on the last day of the conference, was full of surprises. The enemy of Yeltsin claimed that it was in fact he who had recommended Yeltsin's nomination to both Politburo and Secretariat. With a reputation for being none too keen on the exploration of Stalin's crimes, Ligachev presented himself as coming from a family whose members had been shot or expelled from the party. There was more to come. At this conference, where punishment was being demanded for guilty leaders, he reminded the audience of the crucial meeting of the Central Committee in March 1985, when Gorbachev was chosen as General Secretary. It had been touch and go. Ligachev knows what he is talking about, noting that "destiny put me at the center of these events." The result might have gone the other way but, notably, for the stand taken by "Politburo members comrade [Viktor] Cherbikov [head of the K.G.B.], comrades Solomentsev and Gromyko." Ligachev's cryptic remark about the "dialectical unity of renewal and continuity" sounded in this context like a reminder to Gorbachev about who had made him king.

Some highly placed people in Moscow had described Ligachev as really being Gorbachev's associate. The rest of his speech better fitted his usually accepted role as leader of the conservatives. We may leave it to the Sovietologists, and time, to show whether the two men are allies by choice or merely provisional partners. What is, unfortunately, more obvious, on the other hand, is that Boris Yeltsin does not seem to have the stature of a leader for the radical wing. His speech contained some interesting suggestions (for example, a referendum on whether party secretaries should head soviets), some pointed attacks (against the party control commission's leniency toward the mafia of big bribe-takers) and a passionate plea against privilege ("We must abolish food 'rations' for the so-called 'starving *nomenklatura*,' eradicate elitism"). But it did not have the coherence, or the sweep, needed for a potential political platform.

Let there be no mistake. This was not a show of equal performers. There was one undisputed star dominating the proceedings and also one unquestioned winner. Mikhail Gorbachev managed to push through all the resolutions he had favored, the general one on restructuring and the more specific ones on democratic reform of the political system, the struggle against bureaucracy, the spread of *glasnost* as a "developing process" and "the shaping of a socialist state based on the rule of law." He also succeeded in imposing a tight timetable, starting with a special session of the Central Committee in July and ending with final elections to the reshaped institutions in the autumn of 1989. Awakened from its Brezhnevian slumber, the Soviet Union is in for quite a bout of political activity.

Hitherto, at the risk of oversimplification, the struggle could be described as basically between the conservatives and the reformers. Now that the economic reform can be expected to start biting, and with issues such as property, privilege or inequality being forced onto the agenda, interests are likely to crystallize and shifting alliances to appear in their full capacity. This is the subject I will try to tackle in my next letter, together with the attitude of the Western left toward these historical changes—a judgment complicated by our ambiguous confusion between the socialist dream and Soviet reality. A confusion perpetrated by the conference's revival of the revolutionary slogan: All power to the soviets. □

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Intervention

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

several Iranian gunboats that reportedly had fired on a neutral vessel. It was in the aftermath of this clash that the Vincennes downed an Iranian passenger jet, killing all 290 people aboard.)

All of these developments come under the heading of "peacetime contingency operations," or the use of military force as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy. According to the Defense Department, these "are politically sensitive military operations . . . characterized by the short-term rapid projection or employment of forces in conditions short of conventional war." Their function is to coerce, intimidate, disarm or punish a recalcitrant adversary or otherwise to assert American power and influence. In less image-conscious times, such activities were known simply as "police" operations.

Police operations of this sort exhibit some marked differences from the more ideologically inspired maneuvers of the early Reagan era. While the earliest L.I.C. operations were quite consciously aimed at the Administration's self-selected "enemies" in the Third World (notably Angola, Cuba, Libya and Vietnam), the more recent actions seem aimed at Third World disorder in general, independent of ideological overtones. (Noriega, after all, was until recently aiding the U.S.-sponsored *contra* effort in Nicaragua.) And while the earlier efforts were largely seen as a test of loyalty to the conservative foreign policy agenda of the Republican Party, these more recent actions are consciously designed to enlist bipartisan support. Thus, while all Democratic presidential candidates eschewed aid for the *contras*, most called for vigorous U.S. military action to curb "terrorists," outlaws and drug-pushers in the Third World.

Following the Vietnam War, most American leaders agreed that the United States should refrain from police operations in the Third World. "The lesson [of Vietnam]," Senator Edward Kennedy declared in 1975, "is that we must throw off the cumbersome mantle of world policeman." This outlook was institutionalized in the War Powers Act and in other legislative constraints on presidential warmaking. The Reagan period, however, brought a gradual relaxation of this view and a steady increase in the number and intensity of overseas police operations. Examples include the U.S. "peacekeeping" operation in Lebanon, the 1983 invasion of Grenada and the 1986 air attack on Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi's headquarters in Libya.

Police and contingency operations of this sort are now considered a major dimension of low-intensity conflict. That term—replacing the Vietnam-tainted "counter-insurgency"—first surfaced in the early 1980s, when the United States assumed responsibility for management of the antiguerrilla war in El Salvador. Although not specifically aimed at a particular region, L.I.C. is almost always associated with the Third World [see Klare, "The New U.S. Strategic Doctrine," *The Nation*, December 28, 1985–January 4, 1986].

At first, L.I.C. was equated with the counterinsurgency doctrine of the Vietnam era. L.I.C. "is more accurately described as revolutionary and counterrevolutionary warfare," Col. John Waghelstein, commander of U.S. Army advisers in El Salvador, wrote in 1985. As time went on, however, L.I.C. doctrine was expanded to cover more and more activities. "L.I.C. is not simply Vietnam revisited," Lieut. Col. Peter Bond of the Army wrote in 1986, nor does it "equate with counterinsurgency." Rather, "L.I.C. is a very broad concept that spans the spectrum of conflict from relative peace to conventional war." Included in this spectrum, according to Pentagon officials, are terrorism and counterterrorism; guerrilla war and counterinsurgency; pro-insurgency (or U.S. support for anticommunist rebels in the Third World, such as the anti-Sandinista *contras*); antidrug operations; border conflicts and minor skirmishes of all sorts; naval show-of-force operations in contested waterways (such as the Persian Gulf); and other contingency operations. As now conceived, L.I.C. as a doctrine has stretched to the point that it embraces almost any sort of short-term military activity that a President might seek to undertake—War Powers Act or no.

This expansion of U.S. military responsibilities is justified, in the view of L.I.C. theorists, because the United States faces a vast and growing threat from social and political disorders in the Third World. This unrest "has become an increasing threat to our interests, as well as those

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of our allies and friends," Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci wrote in early 1988. Although not as threatening as a potential Soviet assault, L.I.C. engagements "represent the principal form of conflict in the world today, and will remain so in the foreseeable future."

To deal with this problem, the Reagan Administration has presided over a significant expansion of America's "power projection" forces—those intended for insertion into overseas conflict zones. This buildup has included the acquisition of two new aircraft carrier battle groups; the formation of four new light infantry divisions; a significant increase in the Marine Corps' amphibious assault capability; a 50 percent increase in long-range airlift capacity; and the revitalization of America's Special Operations Forces.

The buildup and the expanded scope of L.I.C. operations are consistent with a broader shift in U.S. military policy. This shift, under way since the mid-1980s, reflects a new U.S. assessment of the world military environment, in which East-West conflict is accorded relatively less urgency than in previous years, but conflict between the industrial North and the revolutionary and transitional forces of the largely agrarian South is accorded relatively more.

During the Ford, Carter and early Reagan years, or what might be called the post-Vietnam era, military officials perceived a significant Soviet threat to NATO and thus pressed for a modernization of U.S. nuclear systems plus a bolstering of U.S. forces in Europe; now, in the wake of the intermediate-range nuclear forces agreement and the conciliatory stance of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, U.S. strategists see a reduced threat from the Soviet Union but an increasing threat from Third World tensions. If Gorbachev's policies last, former *New York Times* military analyst Drew Middleton wrote in 1987, the nuclear threat is likely to diminish but at the same time "it would appear that we face a period in which our armed forces must be prepared to fight all over the world in relatively minor encounters."

Proponents of this new outlook hold that U.S. leaders overemphasized the risk of European conflict in the post-Vietnam era and underemphasized the risk posed by low-intensity conflict. While the threat of nuclear escalation made a European war highly improbable, these strategists argue, the growing importance of overseas markets and oil supplies, coupled with the proliferation of Soviet-backed insurgency, generated critical new threats in the Third World. "Current defense [policies] . . . that focus so heavily on a NATO contingency are becoming increasingly inappropriate to the global power shifts under way and the new identifiable threat environments in non-NATO areas," retired Col. James Motley wrote in 1985 in *Military Review*, the Army's theoretical strategy journal. "The United States should reorient its focus and traditional policies away from an almost exclusive concentration on NATO to better influence politico-military outcomes in the resource-rich and strategically located Third World areas."

Although considered heretical by many senior U.S. strategists until very recently, this outlook received high-level endorsement with the publication, this January, of *Discriminate Deterrence*, the report of the U.S. Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy [see editorial, "More Vietnams?" *The Nation*, January 23]. Established by the Defense Department and the National Security Council in 1986, the commission was charged with shaping defense policies for the 1990s and the opening decade of the twenty-first century. Two conservative military thinkers, Fred Iklé (then Under Secretary of Defense) and Albert Wohlstetter (a Pentagon consultant and former Rand Corporation official), were picked to chair the commission, and a blue-ribbon panel of former U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, was assembled to prepare the report.

"An emphasis on massive Soviet attacks leads to tunnel vision among defense planners," the report notes, echoing Colonel Motley. "An excessive focus on these contingencies diverts defense planners from trying to deal with many important and far more plausible situations in which threats of nuclear annihilation would not be credible." The "more plausible situations" that most concern the authors of *Discriminate Deterrence* are limited conflicts on the European periphery and in the Third World at large. "These conflicts in the Third World are obviously less threatening than any Soviet-American war would be, yet they have had and will have an adverse *cumulative effect* on U.S. access to critical regions, on American credibility among allies and friends, and on American self-confidence." [Emphasis added.] To address these contingencies better, *Discriminate Deterrence* recommends an increase in U.S. military aid to friendly Third World regimes for their internal defense, plus an expansion of America's power-projection capabilities.

Although not a policy-setting body per se, the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy represents a cross-section of the U.S. strategic community, and thus its recommendations can be expected to carry significant weight. Indeed, *Discriminate Deterrence* has received considerable attention in the press and in Congress, and several of the 1988 presidential primary candidates espoused very similar positions. Improving conventional defenses, Michael Dukakis declared in 1987, "means strengthening airlift and sealift capacity so that we can get our forces to the front in time to fight a war, not just watch one."

The growing emphasis on power projection and Third World disorder also comes at a time when policy-makers are attempting to deal with the political and military consequences of the budget deficit, the trade imbalance, the transition from international creditor to debtor status and other unfavorable economic trends. While these trends have been evident for several years, they acquired new visibility and import following the stock market crash of last October 19. After the crash, many lawmakers called for extraordinary measures to reduce the deficit and reverse the trade imbalance, including a cap on military spending and a reduction in economic assistance to foreign allies.

The economic turmoil has also led many U.S. leaders to re-examine many of the basic tenets of U.S. "grand strategy"—particularly the large and costly defense commitment to NATO and Japan. The debate over allied "burden-sharing" has been further intensified by the publication of Paul Kennedy's best-selling *The Rise and Fall of the Great*

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Powers. Although Kennedy does not specifically recommend a reduced U.S. military commitment to America's wealthiest allies, his comments on the relative economic decline of the nation and the attendant risk of "imperial overstretch" have led many U.S. policy-makers to call for a significant shift in the economic burdens of Western defense. "The United States has been bearing a disproportionate share of the burden of defending the alliances in which we participate," former Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle told the Defense Burden-Sharing Panel of the House Armed Services Committee in February 1988. "Our defense effort, from which our allies also derive protection, could be shared, and should be shared more equitably."

Calls for increased burden-sharing by U.S. allies are often accompanied by claims that the United States faces a growing military challenge in the Third World and that it must therefore devote greater resources to the threat of regional conflict. "Since Europe can and should do more for its defense, and since the United States has to make more of a defense effort *elsewhere* but cannot afford to do so," Brzezinski wrote in *Foreign Affairs*, "it follows that a gradual but significant readjustment in burden-sharing is necessary and will occur." [Emphasis added.]

Indeed, what seems to be emerging here is a new consensus on the ideal division of labor between the United States and its allies. Previously, U.S. grand strategy called for the primary U.S. military effort to be focused in Europe and the northwest Pacific, with regional defense responsibilities elsewhere to be shared with the former colonial powers (notably Britain and France) and with such regional surrogates as Israel, Iran (under the Shah) and Indonesia. Under the new consensus, defense responsibilities in Europe and the Pacific will be shared more equitably with the NATO powers and Japan, while regional peacekeeping will become the primary responsibility of the United States. This is the underlying premise of *Discriminate Deterrence* and of other recent proposals for the overhaul of U.S. grand strategy.

Obviously, a realignment of military responsibility on this scale cannot be engineered overnight. But there is no doubt that many policy-makers are thinking along these lines, and that many political and economic factors seem to favor such a shift. Unless, therefore, there is a dramatic upset in international politics (such as a power struggle in the Soviet Union leading to the ascendancy of a hard-line anti-Westerner), we can expect that American military policy will coalesce increasingly around an interventionist, police-type role in the Third World. Instead of facing East, across the north German plain toward Eastern Europe and Moscow, U.S. power will be turned to the South—to the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean area and the southwest Pacific.

For many Americans, this shift will be seen as a prudent response to domestic and international conditions. It appears relatively safer than the existing U.S. posture (since it presumably diminishes the risk of a head-on collision with the Soviet Union); cheaper (since a light infantry division intended for Third World contingencies costs a lot less than a

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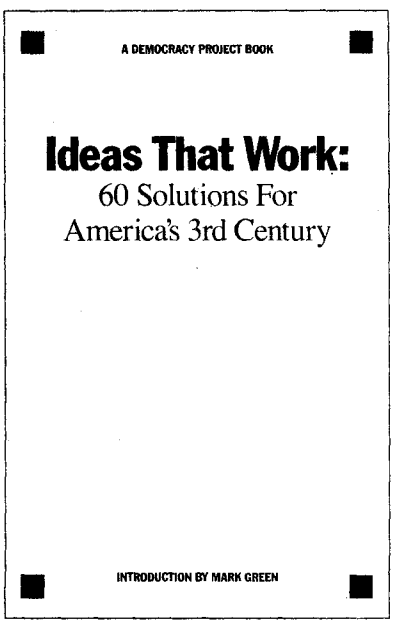

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heavy armored division equipped for combat in Europe); and more realistic (since the threat from the South appears to exceed the threat from the East). Such views can be found among leaders of both parties and seem to span the political spectrum, from liberal to conservative. No matter who gets elected in November, therefore, we can expect that such views will prevail in the post-Reagan epoch.

But however attractive such a posture may appear, future U.S. policy-makers are likely to make the same discovery as those of the Kennedy-Johnson era and their Soviet counterparts of the late Brezhnev era—that persistent military involvement in Third World conflicts often leads to local quagmires of astonishing depth. This is the lesson of Vietnam, just as it is the lesson of Afghanistan. Future quagmires, moreover, are likely to prove considerably more hazardous than previous ones, since many potential adversaries—including small and isolated guerrilla forces—are now equipped with sophisticated guns and missiles acquired from friendly governments or black marketeers. Thus, in Afghanistan, the helicopter loss rate was significantly higher than it was in Vietnam, after Afghan rebels acquired Stinger antiaircraft missiles from the Central Intelligence Agency; and the damage to ships from mines and missiles in the Persian Gulf has surely exceeded that of any other regional Third World struggle. The destructiveness of such conflicts also increases their potential for rapid escalation. It is not hard to imagine, for instance, that the shootdown of Iran Air Flight 655 on July 3 could have prompted Iranian retaliation against U.S. warships in the gulf, leading in turn to U.S. air strikes against Iranian air and naval bases, and to new Iranian attacks, in an escalating spiral.

Furthermore, while it might at first appear that a shift in emphasis from East-West to North-South conflict would lessen the risk of a U.S.-Soviet confrontation, this may not necessarily prove to be the case. While General Secretary Gorbachev has promised to diminish Soviet military involvement in regional Third World strife, and has already negotiated a pullout from Afghanistan, he has also made it clear that the Soviet Union will remain a global power with significant ties to friendly Third World countries, including Cuba and Vietnam. It is possible, therefore, that U.S. leaders may underestimate Moscow's determination to retain a presence in the Third World and therefore initiate hostilities against a Soviet ally—prompting Russian countermoves and precipitating a superpower engagement.

Such an engagement would, moreover, entail a high risk of nuclear escalation. Because the interventionary forces of both Washington and Moscow are equipped with so-called tactical nuclear weapons, and because the military doctrine of each superpower stresses the actual use of such weapons to forestall a devastating nonnuclear attack by the other, it is possible that a future U.S.-Soviet clash in the Third World (especially one that encompasses intense naval encounters) could escalate rapidly and inadvertently across the nuclear threshold. And while such a risk appears relatively lower today than it was earlier in the Reagan era, this scenario remains the most plausible path to nuclear war that can be envisioned today. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Crossing Borders

EARL SHORRIS

MYSELF WITH OTHERS: Selected Essays. *By Carlos Fuentes. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 214 pp. $19.95.*

If an artist's life is not tragic, there will always be a critic to help it in that direction, and if the artist is unlucky or talks too much, the critic will be himself; such is the lesson of *Myself With Others*, a new book of essays by the more or less Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes.

I say "more or less Mexican" because Fuentes was born in Panama, raised mainly in the United States and only introduced to life in Mexico when he was 16 years old. As one might expect, cultural identity is both the subject of most of the essays in the new book and the key to his fictions. If he had been born a U.S. citizen instead of a Mexican, his expatriate life might make him more interesting to his countrymen—one thinks of Stein, Hemingway and the Lost Generation. If he had been born in Missouri or Idaho, like Eliot or Pound, the multicultural aspect of his works would be a fascination to the neighbors he left behind; but Fuentes is a Mexican, and in Mexico a man who makes his career in the United States is called a *pocho*, and that is an insult.

The old Spanish meaning of *pocho* was faded, discolored, rotten fruit; now it refers to an Americanized Mexican, one who is despised just a little by his countrymen. I know the word well, for I grew up on the Mexican border, and I have heard the derision in the voices of Mexicans from the capital when they speak about the *pochos*. The rules of the country are that *pochos* sing when they speak, like the Mexicans in old MGM movies; all *pochos* dress badly, generally in purple and orange; *pochos* think the Yanquis like them, but they are more of a joke to Yanquis than to Mexicans; *pochos* have no culture. All of this is summed up in a cruel admonitory joke told in Mexico City about *pochos*:

A Mexican who has been working in Phoenix is stopped by a Mexican border guard as he crosses the Rio Grande at El Paso on his way home. "What is your name?" the border guard asks.

"John Sanchez."

"John?"

"Yes."

"And what is your occupation, *Mister John* Sanchez?"

"I am a *Latin Lover.*"

"You look more like a *bracero* to me."

"No, sir, I am a *Latin lover.* It's true. You see, when I finish work in the fields on Saturday night, I go to the barracks and take a shower, and then I put on my purple shirt and green trousers and orange shoes and go into Phoenix and when the gringos see me, they all say, 'Here comes that fucking Mexican.'"

For a North American, part of the dominant political, social, cultural and economic force of the hemisphere, the hostility toward *pochos* may seem strange: We admire diversity; there is a certain generosity about conquerors—they esteem the works of the natives and send specimens back home. The conquered live with their backs to the cultural wall. That has been the case in Mexico since the Toltecs conquered the Mayas and the wild tribes of the north occupied the valley of Mexico. The cultural palimpsest that is Mexico is the result, as Fuentes says, of a succession of defeats. So is the character of Mexico when it comes to any rapprochement with Yanqui culture.

Whether Mexicans are right or wrong to feel this way about American culture is not the question here. It is simply a fact, one that has great importance in the career of Carlos Fuentes. And other writers as well. Take ice, for example. When Fuentes writes about his friend (all great men are friends of Carlos Fuentes, who is the worst name-dropper since Truman Capote) García Márquez, he points to the famous passage about the discovery of ice in *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* In the Latin American countries, ice is one of the great symbols of cultural imperialism. When a Mexican marketing executive, working for Pepsi-Cola in the late 1940s, conceived the idea of teaching Mexicans to drink iced soft drinks, he changed the country. Within months there was a giant Pepsi-Cola bottle in the center of the bullring. Ice changed everything: the way people ate, lived, spoke and thought. Ice, which came down from the North, and the sound of ice, the English language, are tools of imperialism in Latin America.

For Carlos Fuentes to say that he chose to write in Spanish rather than English because "the English language, after all, didn't need another writer," and now to write his autobiographical and literary essays in English is a kind of suicide in Mexico, one from which his reputation there can never recover. Whether he chose this break with nationality or it was inevitable, I do not know, but he expected it, he must have felt it coming as one feels a shadow in the little paranoia that facilitates survival, for he wrote in his autobiographical essay:

> I always tried to tell my critics: Don't classify me, read me. I'm a writer, not a genre. Do not look for the purity of the novel according to some nostalgic canon, do not ask for generic affiliation but rather for a dialogue, if not for the outright abolition, of genre; not for one language but for many languages at odds with one another; not, as Bakhtin would put it, for unity of style but for *heteroglossia*, not for monologic but for dialogic imagination. I'm afraid that, by and large, in Mexico at least, I failed in this enterprise. Yet I am not disturbed by this fact.

Perhaps not. But most of the essays in *Myself With Others* can be read as defenses of *pochismo.* Literature, according to Fuentes, is *pochismo*, crossing borders from one book to the next, one culture to another, mixing points of view; great works are, he says, plurivocal rather than univocal. In the best essay in the book, a reading of *Don Quixote* as a dialogue between the reader and writer as well as between art and reality, Fuentes says, "*Don Quixote* is the most Spanish of all novels. Its very essence is defined by loss, impossibility, a burning quest for identity, a sad conscience of all that could have been and never was, and, in reaction to this deprivation, an assertion of total existence in a realm of the imagination."

His view of *Don Quixote* is a view of himself, even to his politics, which are of that moral sweetness by which the left wins the consenting loyalty of decent people: "In *Don Quixote*, the values of the age of chivalry acquire, through Love, a democratic resonance; and the values of the democratic life acquire the

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resonance of nobility. Don Quixote refuses both the cruel power of the mighty and the herd instinct of the lowly: his vision of humanity is based not on the lowest common denominator but on the highest achievement possible."

For all that he writes about literature born from language rather than life, for all his insistence that he writes of an imagined Mexico as Gogol wrote of an imagined small-town Russian bourgeoisie, Fuentes cannot bring himself to think of literature without moral values; he is a politicized man, and for him there can be neither the amorality of the philosophical aesthete, like William Gass, nor the meaningless objectivity of the *nouvelle vague*. Fuentes imagines, he lies, and so when his fiction is good, which is sometimes, he tells truths, or at the least engages in honest dialogue with his readers—for Carlos Fuentes, in the manner of Diderot, as emulated and explicated by Milan Kundera, does not deny his own presence in his work. He crosses the border, if you will, and engages the reader on the other side.

But something about this way of working discomfits him. It seems to overwhelm his thinking. He writes of Gogol as a man who disguises himself, who has a displaced identity:

> Displacement achieves all of its meanings in Gogol.
>
> First, it means flight from Russia. There is a troika on permanent call in Gogol's soul, and its purpose is to carry him away from Russia. Perhaps the most Russian of all literary works is *Dead Souls*. It was written in Rome because, as Gogol says, "the contemporary author, the comic author, the portrayer of mores, must be as far as possible from his country. The prophet finds no honor in his homeland."

Everywhere he turns Fuentes finds a *pocho*. For a philosopher to illuminate the literary history of Spain, he chooses Erasmus, a Dutchman who lived in England, influenced Spain, and spent most of his later years traveling from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism and back. Johan Huizinga said of Erasmus that he desired experience in old books rather than in the world; he wanted people to speak of ordinary things in Latin. If there was a first literary man, it was Erasmus, and if the first literary man had any permanent identity, it was as a kind of *pocho*, a religious, philosophical and geographical border rat.

So Fuentes is consistent throughout his works; he is, in what he begins to define as a *pocho* (although he would never apply that word to himself) literary tradition, a man from nowhere, which is the same as everywhere: a universal character, loyal to language, not to land. He wishes to create the world in his work, and he finds the stuff of creation in books instead of life. Sometimes he succeeds in these creations, too often he cannot; a gloss is not art. Imagination which arises solely from imagination lacks the weight of the world; it floats, we cannot touch it and it cannot touch us. To lie about someone else's lies—i.e., to make fictions of fictions—can have the effect of multiplying by zero.

Fuentes works best when he works close to the bone, as in *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, his novel of a corrupt revolutionary, or *The Old Gringo*, his novel of *pochismo* in all its forms, political, cultural, mythological, sexual; there is even a sense in *The Old Gringo* of the passage from life to death as a form of *pochismo*. It is a book of mirrors. If ice is the symbol of imperialism, the mirror is the symbol of *pochismo*. The literary theory of *pochismo*, as practiced by Fuentes, has a structuralist underpinning. Ideas, themes, names are mirrored across cultures. "Language is the house of Being," as Heidegger said, and language can be translated, for the grammar, at its deepest level, some say, is hard-wired. If this structuralist notion is correct, *pochismo* is the natural state of man; all humans are *pochos*, some just live too far from the border to enjoy life at its fullest.

The idea doesn't sell in Mexico. His critics there have been goading Fuentes into naïve attempts to explain himself. Gathered together into a book, these attempts become too formal, too serious; the explanations go on too long, and instead of a shield they become a wound.

Now, the critics have come to make the wound into a tragedy. Since Fuentes has published an autobiographical essay, his critics are free to address their attacks ad hominem. Even his birth in Panama (his father was assigned there by the Mexican foreign service) may be turned against him, as if it were an act of will, a crime for which the infant should have been denied the right to practice literature. Such is the argument advanced in *The New Republic* of June 27 by the Mexican political journalist Enrique Krauze. In a long essay covering Fuentes's entire career, Krauze attempts to make Mexico's best-known novelist into the old *pocho* joke. It is a curious performance, intellectually correct and morally wrong; Krauze knows the facts but not their meaning.

Krauze comes from a school of blinding nationalism that cannot admit the shadow from the North that affects his country. He attacks Fuentes for admitting the loss of Texas as a trauma. He credits his work only when it verges on naturalism, as in the collection of stories called *Burnt Water*, which are, in truth, the most ordinary works of an extraordinary writer, fictions in which the author of *Aura* seems to have forgotten how to fly. Over and over, across ten pages, Krauze belabors the question of identity without ever owning up to the deep prejudice Mexicans feel toward one of their own who has become Americanized. It is a saddening performance to witness, a man writing out of the pain of life under the North American reign, unable even to accept the accomplishment of *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, claiming that this exquisite rendering of the betrayal of a revolution lacks the smell of gunpowder and is constructed in a chilling intellectual fashion to exemplify the seven deadly sins.

Krauze leaves no questionable act of the author's life in the closet, and he knows the mistakes well: Fuentes's loyalty to the Echeverria administration while knowing of President Echeverria's complicity in the shooting of the stu-

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dents in Tlatelolco in 1968; the insistent, aggravating name-dropping that permeates the essays; the reliance of the author upon his personal charm, which is said to be considerable. But it is only near the end of the Krauze diatribe that the reader begins to understand why he chooses to make Carlos Fuentes, who lifts *pochismo* to the level of art, into John Sanchez.

Out of his political revision of reality Krauze constructs a connection between *pochismo* and support of the Sandinistas. It is a long and tortuous trip from a childhood in the United States to a reputation as "the tenth comandante" in Nicaragua, but Krauze follows it doggedly, naming the sins of Carlos Fuentes: dedicating a novel to C. Wright Mills; approval (even though tempered by skepticism) of the Castro government; writing for *The Nation*; favoring revolution over continued suffering; admiring Lázaro Cárdenas (the Mexican president who expropriated U.S.-owned oil companies in 1938).

In fact, Fuentes is politically a mild man. He writes glowingly of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and hopes aloud that banana republics are not replaced by "balalaika republics" in Latin America. Although his literary essays are derivative and only mildly disguised apologies for his own works, one cannot help but like the man who appears in them.

Krauze, who sets out to kill Fuentes, succeeds only in illuminating him and his work. There is a connection between *pochismo* and support of the Sandinistas. The *pocho* is the man who has experienced ice and learned from his experience that it is possible for anyone, even a poor Mexican, to be cool in the heat of the afternoon. The *pocho* is greedy for equality. He is a realist in worldly ways, although he sees the world, as Fuentes notes, with the multifaceted vision of the apprehending insect. The *pocho* is Don Quixote, who lives on the border between what is and what ought to be, knowing both, aware always, loving his readers, the knight who would lead a crusade to make the world equal to its imagination.

The true crime of the *pocho*, in the eyes of the chauvinist, is that he can dream of himself and the world. John Sanchez or Charles Fountains, he so loves Aldonza that he sees in her the possibility of Dulcinea. Nothing could be more radical. Fuentes is a revolutionary. The shrill voices of criticism are a windmill. One of the voices is his own. □

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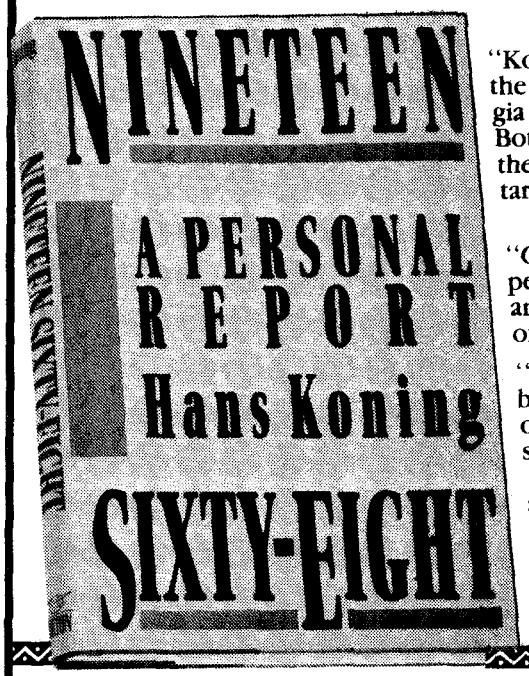

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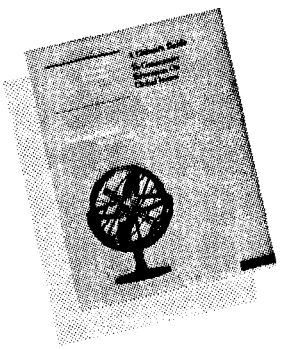

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Heavyweights

MICHAEL SHULAN

Atlantic City, June 27

The title bout between Mike Tyson and Michael Spinks was a good six hours off when 750 or so very special guests began weaving their way through velvet ropes into the ballroom of the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino, heading for a knockdown prefight gala. Up front over the stage, projected on walls the color of raw tuna, line drawings of two heavyweights sparred with a martini glass and a spray of stars. Out on the floor real martini glasses and stars were increasingly in evidence, but Spinks and Tyson stayed off somewhere quiet, meditating. And visually, at least, there was little beside the frieze to link the scene with boxing. Three thousand pieces of sushi, mounds of saucisson in puff pastry and quite a few small boys in suits made it feel more like a lavish (if nonkosher) bar mitzvah than a prelude to the undisputed Heavyweight Championship of the World.

"It's a great moment," proud papa Donald Trump said. "Wait until you see the floor in another hour. It will be incredible. Enjoy it."

I did my best, sidling up to the bar with half a dozen TV cameras to watch Billy Crystal and Rob Reiner order drinks. A moment later I was swept along as Madonna and Sean Penn circled the room throwing air punches at the press and then ducked down a service elevator to the basement, moving one portly chef in a tall white toque to observe sadly, "They can't even have any fun!" Few people stopped to commiserate, however, in full flight now as they were after Jack Nicholson, Warren Beatty and Paul Simon (the singer in a T-shirt, not the politician in a bow tie). Nicholson, wearing sunglasses and beaded Indian loafers, clutched a bottle of Evian water in one hand, a smoldering cigarette in the other, and leered coyly at the cameras. The trio made their way to the front table and began an intimate conversation under the klieg lights, joined by their host and author Stephen King in natty white patent pumps. Soon Leroy Neiman—a long unlit cigar clenched in his teeth at a perfect right angle to his equally long mustache—came over and sketched the scene for posterity.

Fun though all this was, after a while I began to wonder what any of it had to do with boxing. Although Ivana Trump (in a swell pink Givenchy pantsuit and lace bustier) said she liked the sport because "there's a smell of something wild in the air, like drag racing," the fumes in the ballroom smelled more like limousine exhaust. Few people over the age of 12 seemed willing to commit themselves on the fight. Of the ones who did, Malcolm Forbes (sans Liz) picked Tyson, cautioning, however, "The young man better find somebody to manage his money."

I was about to leave for the arena when a commotion at the door signaled the arrival of Don King and Jesse Jackson with a phalanx of Secret Service agents and junior G-men. They sat down with Donald Trump at a side table and were served what looked like Diet Pepsi on the rocks.

"Reverend Jackson," somebody yelled. "Who do you pick for the fight?"

"I like Mike!" Jackson replied, echoing the noncommittal phrases I had been hearing all evening. This one, though, had a doubly familiar ring, reminiscent as it was of a certain 1952 presidential slogan. Indeed, a similar thought occurred to somebody else.

"You know that Donald's supporting George Bush. What do you think your supporters would think if they saw you sitting here with him?"

Jackson grinned. "It's just a rumor," he said, flashing his 18-karat Presidential Model Rolex as he placed an arm on his neighbor's shoulder.

As I was leaving the room, three modest young ladies in gold lamé fairy wings shielded their chests with 8 x 10 glossies of the Reverend and serenaded him with a love song.

The ring looked minuscule in the Atlantic City Convention Hall, dwarfed by the vast soaring pile, which looks like a cross between a green-tiled high school gymnasium and an art-deco airplane hangar. My press pass put me in a $1,500 seat in the front row of "Golden Ringside." (Seeing the word "ringside," I at first thought someone had confused *The Nation*'s punchy name for a pugilistic one, but the section was actually twenty or thirty feet back.) During the preliminary bouts, the crowd seemed rather staid by boxing standards—not all that different from audiences for the Miss America pageants, which are held in the convention hall each September. Of the two audiences, the fight crowd was probably the more conservatively dressed—many business suits, only a sprinkling of snappy shirtless tuxedos like the one worn by Butch Lewis (Spinks's manager). Certainly the barmaids in abbreviated boxing robes and the round girls in feathers and top hats were no sleazier than the pageant's swimsuit contestants. Perhaps it was the exorbitant price of the tickets, but everything seemed rather bland and decorous—not wholesome exactly, but almost.

The arena grew restive by 10:45 or so, when the microphone lowered and the ring announcer in a white dinner jacket began a long series of introductions. The agonizing twenty minutes that followed were in many ways a tip-off to the true nature of the event in question. For every legitimate sports figure named there seemed to be two "celebrities" of dubious note—two Oprah Winfreys for every Jersey Joe Walcott; one Carl Icahn and one Laurence Tisch for each Roberto Duran or Magic Johnson. In keeping with the sanitized air, politicians were out in force: The list included Governor Tom Kean of New Jersey, several congressmen, mayors and a Federal judge. (Jackson was billed as "A good friend of Donald Trump.") Eventually Muhammad Ali was helped into the ring and, looking dazed, put on a pair of glasses. Someone unaware of his Parkinson's syndrome would think he didn't recognize where he was, so bland was the setting, so indigestible had been the buildup. Was this the undefeated Heavyweight Championship of the World or a rerun of the Daytime Emmy Awards? (It needed a wisecracking host, but all of them were off duty in the V.I.P. section for the evening.)

"Is everybody ready to rumble?" the announcer intoned ominously over the theme from *Rocky*. Everybody was indeed; and even more so after nothing happened for another five or six minutes (during which time someone, in an effort to be reassuring, blared over the P.A., "This is it"). Finally, Spinks and Tyson made their long walks through the crowd and climbed through the ropes—Spinks's championship belts were brandished over a minion's head while Tyson's were slung like sides of beef over his trainer's shoulder. The canvas was so

Michael Shulan is a writer living in New York City.

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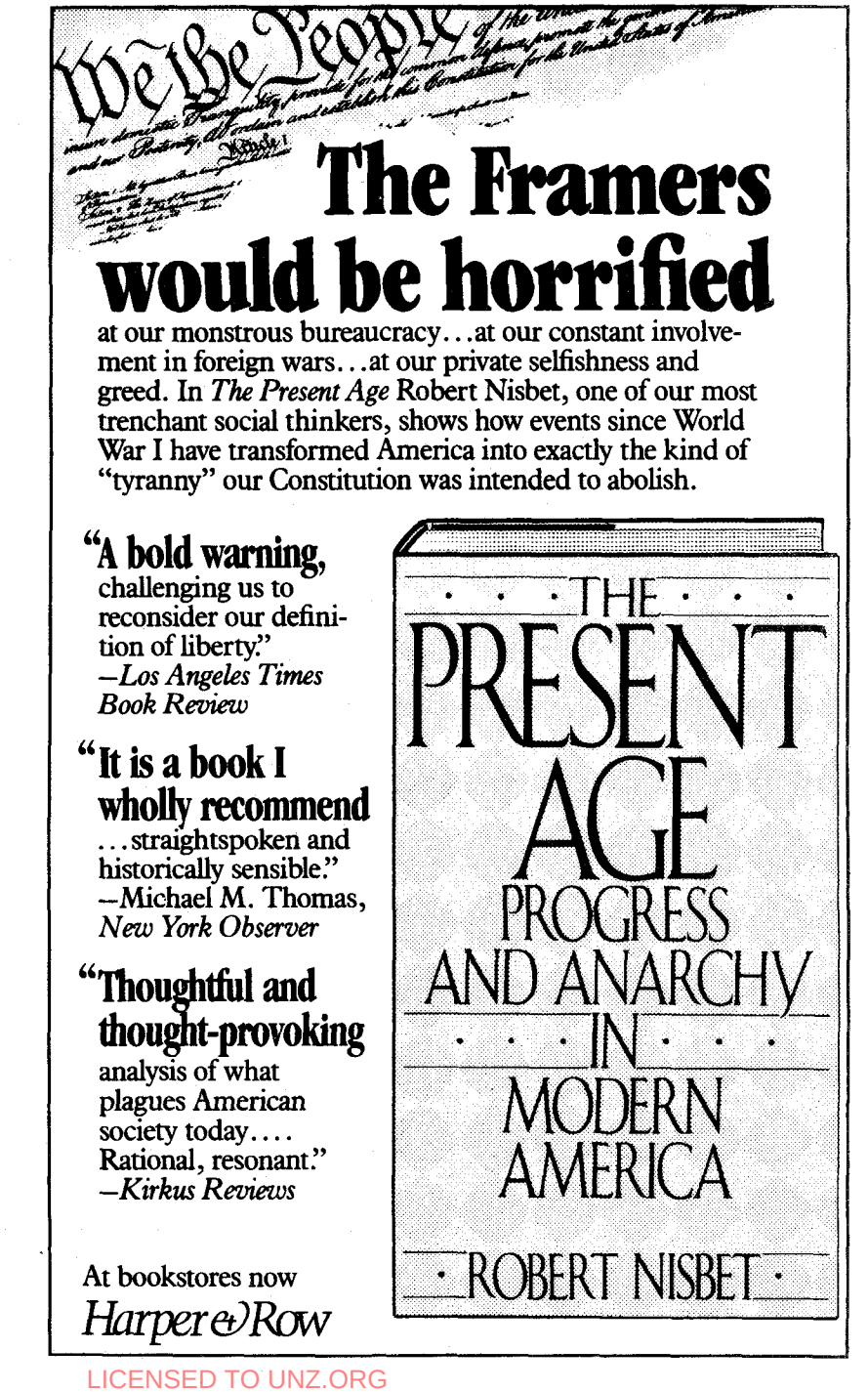
clogged with large stationary bodies it was like a parking lot, moving my neighbor to observe: "They're gonna hafta start knocking all those sleazoids out of the ring in order to get at each other."

When it finally happened, the ninety-one second fight was brutal and vivid. Although it's safe to say a good portion of the 21,000 or so in the arena missed the left hook that knocked Spinks down the first time, or the straight right that put him down "once and for all" and ended the fight, the shock waves from Tyson's punches were palpable to everyone. Here truly was "one scary guy," as Stephen King (who knows about such things) had said before the fight. Spinks looked not so much inept as lost or even deranged. Any sane human being (even a fighter) would get out of the way instead of trying to halt a train by standing on the tracks. Spinks was like an actor who has blundered onto a stage and starts saying lines from the wrong production. He was lucky the hook came as fast as it did, lucky to emerge with no eggs on his face or other visible damage.

Still, if Spinks was well out of it, the crowd wasn't. Denied a proper catharsis—this had been a spectacle with an interminable come-on but no real beginning or middle, just an abrupt end—they stood on the chairs they had paid so dearly to so briefly occupy, shaking their heads and refusing to leave as the announcer intoned repeatedly, "Thank you and good night." An enterprising pickpocket in a dinner jacket climbed into the ring waving a handtowel and was thrown out bodily, arcing high in the air and crushing the third row of seats beneath him. What had seemed almost innocent at first now threatened to turn ugly. It culminated in an angry mob at the entrance of the postfight press conference, pushing and shoving in a last effort to see something for their money.

What they would have witnessed had they gained admission was a replay of the whole evening in miniature. There were Oprah and Jack and Ivana in the V.I.P. section before the podium; and Jersey Joe in back, wedged in with the working stiffs. After Tyson's trainer loosened up the press by insulting them, Tyson himself threatened to retire like a sulky adolescent because his wife and mother-in-law had been so relentlessly pilloried. "Some of you guys are my friends," he said, "but most of you are assholes." He had a point of course, or at least part of one. All the publicity about fender-benders and social diseases had been ludicrous and unseemly, but it had also helped to whip up enthusiasm for the (ultimately one-sided) contest. That Tyson was now trying to dismiss Bill Cayton, his longtime (and generally well-respected) manager, and throw his lot in with the Donald Trumps of the world showed how much he was learning, that big-time boxing now plays by the same rules as big-time anything else. As a fighter, Tyson is frightening to watch, mildly interesting to think about, of no interest whatsoever to listen to and—for the foreseeable future at least—probably unstoppable. A perfect match for Donald Trump, in other words.

On the way back to my motel, I looked in on the victory party upstairs in the convention center. A great unruly crowd clutching passes were pressing against a closed set of double doors, held back by security guards with bullhorns and nightsticks. Inside, in a sweltering, nearly pitch-black hall, there were plates of ribs instead of sushi, cans of Budweiser instead of Dom Perignon, a deejay playing rap music instead of a four-piece orchestra and a giant ice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sculpture of a trophy dripping onto the floor. Most of the limos had departed before the guards started admitting the crowd, half a dozen at a time over the next three or four hours. I went and stood between the belt buckles of Magic Johnson and Robert Parish for a moment, then got myself a beer. The chorus of the rap song which was booming went, "Don't, don't, don't believe the hype." □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

David Hockney

A retrospective exhibition enables us to appreciate an artist's early work in the light of an unfurled future to which the artist and his or her contemporaries would have then been blind. But it also enables us to see those early works as they could have been seen at the time, had it not been for the work's newness and for factors in the critical environment that caused it to be seen for something other than it was. Consider David Hockney's *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World*, which hangs just past the entrance to the retrospective being given him at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City until August 14. Hockney painted it in 1961, when he was 24 and something of a prodigy, for he was still a student at the Royal College of Art in London. To be sure, the most advanced art in England just then was being made by students at the Royal College of Art, by R.B. Kitaj and Norman Toynton as well as by Hockney, and it comes as somewhat of a jolt to recognize that the legendary "Young Contemporaries" exhibition of 1961 was in effect a show of student work. Lawrence Alloway contributed a catalogue essay to that show and reproduced *The Most Beautiful Boy* with his important 1966 essay on British Pop Art. So Alloway affords a very clear example of how the work was perceived when it was first shown.

The painting is, in many ways, an anthology of the artistic themes and strategies that defined a new sensibility. It was, for one thing, figural at a time when Abstract Expressionism, in truth all but finished as an artistic movement, was still regarded as the only present with a future, and that future was to exclude the figure—the image—as dead. Images, if they were to be used, had to be taken over from orders of representation as remote from high art as could be found—from the art of children, or what were regarded as primitive peoples, or from commercial labels or the mass media, which were then being used to such revolutionary effect by the Young Contemporaries' peers in New York under the later label of Pop Art. Hockney's painting, moreover, used words as part of its content at a time when the orthodox position was that the entire meaning of a painting must be carried by nonverbal forms alone. But lettering, if not appropriated from commercial advertising or logograms, had to be of the kind rudely scrawled on walls or sidewalks. Alloway (to whom the expression "Pop Art" is due) believed that the new art expressed some connection to the city, "by using typical products and objects, including the techniques of graffiti and the imagery of mass communication." Something a good bit deeper was taking place in these works than an artistic celebration of the urban reality, I think, and certainly this was true of Hockney. Still, it was possible and perhaps urgent for Alloway to see the works as he did.

In any case, all the components just listed are present in *The Most Beautiful Boy*. In the upper right is an Alka Seltzer label, as if crookedly postered against a wall on which words and images are scribbled or scratched. The most beautiful boy himself is smeared onto the surface, as if by a child confirmed in his childishness by a precocious exposure to *l'art brut* (Hockney at the time was admired for his exquisite draftsmanship and awarded the gold medal for drawing when he graduated). The figure is juxtaposed with its own description—the title of the work—lettered along his back: word and image occupy the same space. But beyond this there is something extremely personal about the painting: It is at least as much an index to the artist as to the artistic currents that flowed through his work. The most beautiful boy is wearing a feminine garment, a frilled dress or nightgown, which looks as if it could have been palimpsestically superimposed on the figure, by someone else, like a piece of graffiti, except for the extreme delicacy with which the hem is executed. The sexual ambiguity that settles on the figure in consequence of the dress and the word "boy" is somewhat resolved by con-

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text: The adjacent *The Cha-Cha That Was Danced in the Early Hours of 24th March* (also from 1961) shows what one would spontaneously read as a leggy girl in a flossy dancing dress, but we know from Hockney's autobiography that the cha-cha in question was danced explicitly for him by a boy who knew that Hockney had eyes for him. So I suppose the transvestite representation connotes the homosexuality about which Hockney was quite candid even then. I would like to connect the Alka Seltzer sign with the boy, as if the picture were a kind of rebus puzzle: Perhaps Alka Seltzer is for heartburn what the most beautiful boy is for a burning heart. This is somewhat confirmed by the presence of a large red heart that seems to zip toward the boy's head with the velocity of a brick pitched by Ignatz at The Most Beautiful Cat in the World. It is a witty and confessional piece of work, a declaration of love, one surmises, and sexually explicit, if the scrawled "69" means what it ordinarily means—and it engages the viewer in the artist's own emotional affairs, as if he wore his heart on his canvas. Viewer, artist, subject and work are woven into a complex communication scarcely typical of someone eager to depict the city; but this is altogether typical of Hockney at this period and, when at his best, in every period.

Not only are these works from the early 1960s about love—erotic and indeed homoerotic love rather than the abstract agape of Robert Indiana's celebrated logogram—but they are unashamedly literary as well. They incorporate the titles they bear as painted inscriptions, which come from the poets whom Hockney particularly admired—Whitman, for example, in "We Two Boys Together Clinging," or Cavafy, in "Kaiserion" ("Ah, see, you came with your vague/fascination. In history only a few/lines are found about you,/and so I molded you more freely in my mind. . . . My art gives your features/a dreamy compassionate beauty"). The images, in both these works, are cunningly childlike, wittily sentimental and composed of frocked boys wryly discordant, with their *art-brut* faces, with the languorous words they distantly illustrate. At the time, perhaps, a surface continuity with the Pop movement screened the fact that something of a far more subjective order was being transacted by an artist who merely exploited what the art world made available but who soon enough embarked on a program that had less and less to do with whatever anyone else was making by way of art. "I paint what I like, when I like and where I like," Hockney wrote, disconcertingly, to those who had other ambitions for his art, mentioning among the subjects that concerned him "landscapes of foreign lands, beautiful people, love, propaganda, and major incidents (of my own life)." Alloway cites this in order to dismiss Hockney's art as "rambling and discursive." But by that time, 1966, Hockney was already famous and extraordinarily successful, and really no longer in need of critical support: He had broken free into the air of glamour and affluence that he has enhanced ever since.

This luminous success is not difficult to understand against the background of what other artists had been doing in the period. In England, there was Francis Bacon, whose images are unrelievedly scary, with figures twisted and compressed into screams: or Lucian Freud, whose chill aggressions in portraiture proclaim the triumph of artistic will over subdued models, and deposit the sour aftertouch of sadism on us. The art of the 1960s was recently celebrated in the May issue of *Artforum* on the twentieth anniversary of the uprising of 1968. It was an art that, however innovative, seems so barren and ravaged and pessimistic that the black-and-white photographs of it seem like documents of a world devastated by a terrible disaster. Hockney alone among advanced artists seemed to be carrying forward the bright affect of the School of Paris (which itself had gone dead by then) with bouquets, languid figures in tasteful interiors, leisured personalities in lovely gardens, substituting a California of the heart for the Côte d'Azur: a place of clear light, clean planes, meridional flora—and emblematic pools. Hockney indeed gave artistic embodiment to southern California with the same authority that Saul Steinberg reinvented a Texas of our menaced dreams. Some months ago in San Antonio I felt myself in a world invented by Steinberg, and in just such a way a Californian like Lawrence Weschler remembers his pre-Hockney visual world through a lens given him by Hockney. So if you were interested in painting that was at once serious and ingratiating, Hockney had no competitors. The work seems simultaneously difficult and available—warmed, like Matisse or Bonnard, by sunlight reflected in blue skies and embracing water, and infused by pleasure and love.

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For all that ingratiating intelligence, the fertility of invention and the cheerful hedonism, I find the work over the several years after the "love" paintings artistically thin. The scruffy palimpsestic surfaces of the early paintings, scored and mottled, smooth into planes of uncadenced blues, tans, yellows and pinks—California hues—while the figures graduate from the primitive and childlike scumbles to blander and more naturalistic figures, almost always amusing and fondly treated. Sometimes a heavily stylized figure is jammed into the same space as one treated naturalistically, which has something of the same effect as putting words and images together in the same space, drawing attention to the fact that this can happen only in pictorial space. This kind of juxtaposition is intoxicating in *Invented Man Revealing Still Life* (1975), in which a man with a plaid torso and washy legs—and a protractor head, a red ring for a nose—draws open the curtains on an exquisitely rendered lavender vase of white tulips: It is as if the Hockney of the 1960s were displaying the Hockney of the 1970s. The same effect is achieved in the 1972 *Portrait of an Artist (Pool With Two Figures)*. A solidly painted young man, presumably the artist of the title, looks down with philosophical wonderment into the swimming pool at his feet. He is placed at the extreme right of the canvas, and if you block him out, there remains a fairly typical Hockney composition of the era—a pool in which great attention is paid to the watery patterns of the surface; a flattened submerged swimmer; and a mountain landscape beyond. It is pleasant enough—but if you now restore the realistic figure, a tension develops between two styles which gives the work a certain excitement and depth. The work through the 1970s thickens perceptibly, most particularly in the great sequence of double portraits, culminating in his powerful *My Parents* of 1977. These I count among the masterpieces of the century.

My Parents was painted when Hockney was 40 and must certainly, in view of its subject and of the complex feelings with which this large square canvas is replete, be some sort of *apologia pro vita sua*, a coming to terms with himself as son and artist. The two parental figures are shown seated, and at an angle to one another on either side of a taboret, a moral geometry Hockney used to great effect in his double portraits: Henry Geldzahler, Celia (Mrs. Clark in *Mr. and Mrs. Clark and Percy*), and Hockney's mother are shown frontally, facing the viewer (and of course the artist); Christopher Scott, Mr. Clark and Hockney's father are shown in full or partial profile. Given the obviously profound affection the artist holds toward the first trio, on the evidence of many marvelously affectionate drawings of them (you can see a wonderful exhibition of Hockney's portrait drawings at the André Emmerich Gallery in New York City until July 29), the frontal pose must carry a certain emotional meaning, and the tension between the differently posed figures must then be a translation into the language of composition of something intense in the language of feeling. Atop the taboret, next to the signature vase of tulips, is a mirror, and it is the latter, reminding us of mirrors in *Las Meninas* (where the parental couple is reflected) or in the *Marriage of Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami* of Jan Van Eyck, that communicates a symbolic signal to the viewer. In part this is because the mirror should reflect the artist himself, computing where he must have sat relative to the composed scene; and in part because what is reflected instead are some reproductions of paintings. One of them is quite distinctly Piero Della Francesca's *Baptism of Christ*, a print we see fastened to a screen in *Looking at Pictures on a Screen*, done the same year and showing Geldzahler alone, in profile, against a screen with four prints taped to it. The other reflection shows the mirror-image of the curtains drawn aside by the invented man to reveal the still life. (These curtains were appropriated from a panel by Fra Angelico.) The curtains certainly remind us of the bedcurtains in the *Arnolfini* portrait, with their heavy symbolic charge: Since baptism and marriage are sacraments—and since pools of water and drawn or closed curtains figure throughout Hockney's work—the conviction is inescapable that even the hedonistic landscapes and interiors must have had a symbolic meaning inscribed onto their pleasing surfaces. I draw attention to only one of the prints in the Geldzahler painting, which reproduces a famous Vermeer, a picture within a picture that has in turn a picture in *it*—specifically, of a triumphant Amor.

My Parents had to be a naturalistic interior space with a strongly defined linear perspective in order to show that the artist himself is not present (since not reflected in the mirror) but has been instead replaced by some images of great art. There is of course another way of reading this fact: Linear perspective reduces the viewer to a kind of disembodied eye excluded from the space into which it looks. The surface of a painting in perspective has been compared to a window since Renaissance times, and so stands as an almost metaphysical boundary between art and life. The exclusionary principle of linear perspective is something to which Hockney, as an optical theorist, is extremely sensitive, and his many discussions and demonstrations of an alternatively structured space—in an issue of the French edition of *Vogue* that he filled with reflections on perspective; in his marvelous fragmented photographs, which seem to take up analytical Cubism where it left off; and even in the charming film he did on a Chinese scroll, in which he praises the more humane use of perspective than is found in a Canaletto behind him—suggest that he comes close to blaming a great many social ills on perspective. The photographs, which seem almost literally to replicate the movements of the eye across a surface in saccadic leaps, imply for him a sense of life and engagement in contrast with the disembodiment implied by linear perspective. "The Chinese landscape painting is a walk through a landscape," he wrote in *Vogue*: "Movement is life. Lack of movement, death." If fixed-point perspective immobilizes the spectator, paintings executed under its aegis situate the spectator outside life, a thought that sits uncomfortably with the commanding perspectival structure of *My Parents*. It is striking that Hockney abandoned such perspective almost immediately after he completed this compelling work. He also, for a long time, gave up painting.

I have sought to render salient two moments in the narrative that a major retrospective challenges us to recover. I think I can grasp the shift from rigid perspective to the cubistic engagement of the moving glance in the photomontages; I am less certain I know what is going on in the Picassoid forms and distortions of the latest phase, except that I am sure, given Hockney's views about perspective and its effect on the viewer, that they are experiments undertaken on our presumed behalf. The neocubist *Mulholland Drive: The Road to the Studio* has more and more grown on

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me. It is almost an emblem for a life, with its ups and downs, leading, in his case, to the studio, which we see from above, with its famous swimming pool. The miracle is that an art so personal should engage us so, suggesting to me that the secret of Hockney's art is to be found between the work and its viewers, a space curiously filled by the artist himself. □

MUSIC.

GENE SANTORO

Betty Carter
Tracy Chapman

Browsing through my local newsstand a couple of weeks ago, I noticed a fanzine proclaiming this "the year of women" in music. Nice idea, if a little late. Until recently, the role of women in pop music has mostly been limited to standing in front of a microphone, mouthing someone else's words and, in one way or another, seducing an audience. But there have always been women who managed to resist handing their careers, aspirations, talents and ideas over to the male-run music industry.

Perhaps the most famous—certainly one of the most relentlessly outspoken of these—is vocalist Betty Carter. Her first real gig was with Lionel Hampton's big band in the late 1940s, where she scat-sang. Hamp dubbed her Betty Bebop, and used her to lure in audiences intrigued by the new sounds. When she went out on her own, she took as her example his wife, Gladys, who actually ran the band's business affairs. Carter did well enough working the club and theater circuit, but not until she hooked up with Miles Davis, and through him with Ray Charles, did she get her career onto vinyl. *Ray Charles and Betty Carter* (Dunhill) is a CD reissue of that fabled (and long-out-of-print) 1961 disc, and boasts such playfully suggestive duets as "Baby It's Cold Outside" and "Takes Two to Tango," where Charles's gruff rasp and Carter's delicate nasality twine in an unforgettable embrace.

Taking control of her business and artistic affairs in a way totally uncharacteristic of women in the industry (and, for that matter, of most men), Carter began her own independent label, Bet-Car, in the late 1960s, and learned how to make records from the inside out—manufacturing, financing, distribution, the works. Her move presaged pianist/composer Carla Bley's creation (with Michael Mantler) of the New Music Distribution Service, an independent pipeline begun fifteen years ago to get unusual music into the stores. (For a free catalogue, which not only lists two thousand titles but includes some hilarious and stinging capsule reviews, write to New Music Distribution Service, Box C-SP, 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.)

Carter's attention to her business didn't distract her from her music. She honed her craft, perfecting a vocal sound that remains as unique as it is underrated. Carter doesn't so much sing a song as dice it with a razor-edged irony: She completely reformulates any tune with her witty tempo jump-cuts, her archly staggered phrasing, her kittenish curl of a voice that somehow sounds as if she's inhaling it. It takes sturdy material to withstand such woman-handling, and as a result standard ballads like "The Man I Love" are Carter's strong suit.

In this Year of the Woman, Carter may finally be reaping what passes for success in the small, financially battered world of jazz. She recently signed a deal with PolyGram that brings her Bet-Car label under that corporate giant's aegis; the first fruit of the collaboration is the aptly titled *Look What I Got* (Verve), which includes her first recording of "The Man I Love," the tune that launched her career forty-two years ago. Reissues of Bet-Car albums like *The Audience With Betty Carter*, *The Betty Carter Album* and a duet disc called *Carmen McRae and Betty Carter* (Great American Music Hall) are scheduled for late summer. So it may turn out to be the 58-year-old Carter's year after all.

Vocalist/songwriter Tracy Chapman is only 24 and pretty reticent about her background—which means her music will have to be sold on its own merits. But whatever her story, her first album, *Tracy Chapman* (Elektra), seems aged by the sheer pressure of experience. Her songs are tales of power and menace—love, racism and sexism are the structural components of her world. Her sinuously bittersweet voice, a smoky threat holding depths in reserve, can clench or ache or moan in a way that recalls the best of Joan Armatrading, one of Chapman's obvious models. Like Armatrading, too, Chapman refuses to limit her music generically; she roves all over to cull elements from country and western,

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reggae, ballads, blues and rock and roll to create an intense sound that can brood or boil.

Her lyrics defy easy categorization as well—the one thing they lack is sentimentality. That's not to say they deny hope, or love; they just refuse to take either at face value. One of her earliest tunes, written six years ago, is called "Talkin' Bout a Revolution," and it does just that: "They're talkin' about a revolution/It sounds like a whisper/While they're standing in the welfare lines/Crying at the doorsteps of those armies of salvation/Wasting time in the unemployment lines/Sitting around waiting for a promotion."

"Fast Car" traces the sorrowful curve of a woman's life that begins with a getaway: Her mother's left the family, she's left school to "take care of" her father; she then leaves with a guy whose car is "a ticket to anywhere." But in Chapman's deft hands, what could lapse into another Springsteen reworking of *West Side Story* takes on unexpected contours. If the relationship starts out as a marriage of convenience in the most literal sense ("Maybe we can make a deal/Maybe together we can get somewhere/Anyplace is better/Starting from zero got nothing to lose"), it naturally, maybe inevitably, evolves into something quite different ("The speed so fast I felt like I was drunk . . . Your arm felt nice wrapped 'round my shoulder/And I had a feeling that I belonged/And I had a feeling I could be someone"). But that escape route turns into a dead end; her life repeats the cycle of poverty and alienation she'd hoped to abandon. The song ends with her confronting her lover, now her husband and the father of their children, with the same choice they'd hoped to flee: "You got a fast car/But is it fast enough so you can fly away/You gotta make a decision/You leave tonight or live and die this way."

Despite the difficult topics she tackles, and the lack of calculation she explores them with, Chapman's been getting a great deal of hype since her album came out. Probably her handlers hope to link her to Suzanne Vega; if that sells her, fine. But where Vega is mostly about posture, Chapman offers a genuine sense of undeceived affirmation in the face of the crush of circumstance. □

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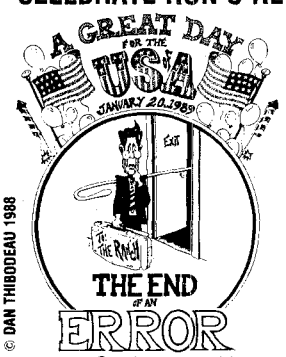

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H	■	S	■	S	■	N	■	I	■	A	■	S	■	S
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C	O	A	T	■	B	O	T	T	L	E	N	O	S	E
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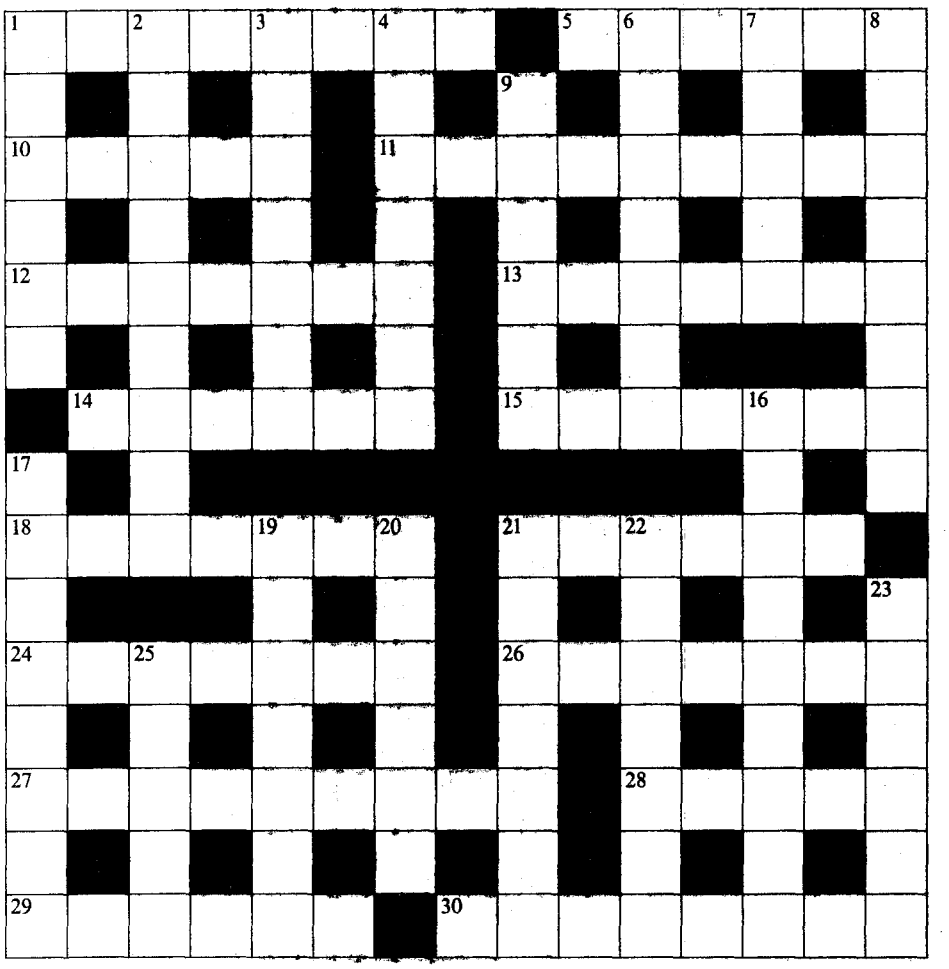
FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 5 Dodgers do, occasionally—fewer hits being the result. (3,3,2,3,3)
10 With free delivery, it still didn't imply having babies at no expense. (5)
11 With a little public notice inside, gets away with certain mischievous adventures. (9)
12 It should be the formic type—although it might be a counteragent. (7)
13 The part of a comic Ronald has down to the letter, classically. (7)
14 The sign of "Quiet!" put on the shelf for security. (6)
15 Battered cans are just what the crusading types expected to come across. (7)
18 Had an outbreak of rain, with one possibly remembered when you go to the wall. (7)
21 With the morning belonging to us, we can look for such dalliance in Paris. (6)
24 The actor's characterization is about a primate in a position of defense. (7)
26 Some form of disagreement when aid is sent, but not first class. (7)
27 Not a national language, displayed by poets near madness. (9)
28 Possibly in the form of a big circle, alternately part of it. (5)
29 Stop with a sort of side street shortly. (6)
30 Sort of give in with the French, to win someone over by flattery. (8)

DOWN

1 and 17 Typically Hans should have a flock of something, but might be called Rover instead. (6,8)
2 Killed, as the engine might be. (9)
3 With no strings attached—at least not properly. (7)
4 Sort of louvered, except for the first number, but such things should have happened earlier. (7)
6 One's luck in the old days at the landing place could be relatively fortunate. (7)
7 Hip boot? A kid might be one without any shoes at all! (5)
8 The constituents of Noyes might be an indecisive answer. (3,3,2)
9 and 21 The clues herein are "an X, as well as a comforter, perhaps." (6,3,4)
16 What a politician might have carried in the South at one time suggests an automobile favorite to capture, as they say. (6,3)
17 See 1 down
19 Discloses what might be devilishly clever! (7)
20 A crazy person, and a hard worker, but somewhat droopy! (6)
21 See 9
22 Blowing from the sea, soon her difficulty might be apparent. (7)
23 The upper-class symbol in a condition which might be a work of art! (6)
25 Said to be known by the experts only? (5)

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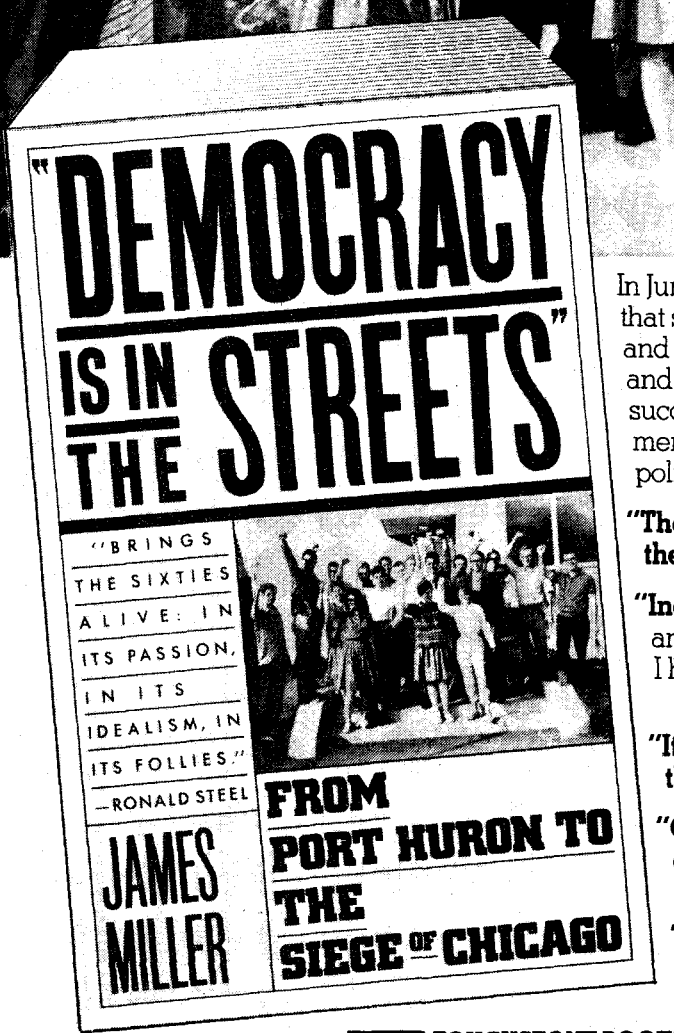
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